THE

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By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus.*

A State without the means of change is without the means of conservation.—*Edmund Burke.*

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THE TWENTY-FIRST CONFERENCE OF MODERN CHURCHMEN

THE BIBLE AND THE MODERN MAN

By the Editor.

THE Twenty-first Annual Conference of Modern Churchmen held at Birmingham September 3rd—8th, 1934, took as its theme, 'The Bible and the Modern Man.'

The following fourteen papers published in this issue of the *Modern Churchman* were contributed to the Conference. Four of these papers, those by the Dean of St. Paul's, the Bishop of Birmingham, the Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, and the Principal of Ripon Hall, are popular in style as they were intended for delivery to evening audiences attended by many who were not Modernists :

(1) *The Use and Misuse of the Bible*, by the Very Reverend W. R. Inge, K.C.V.O., D.D., F.B.A.

(2) *The Old Testament in relation to the origin and evolution of the Religion of Israel*, by the Rev. Principal Lofthouse, D.Litt.

(3) *The Evolution of Judaism in the Post-exilic Period, with special reference to its Literature*, by the Rev. T. H. W. Maxfield, M.A.

(4) *The Old Testament and the Modern Man*, by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Birmingham.

(5) *The New Testament in relation to the origin and evolution of the Christian Religion*, by the Rev. Principal Webb, B.D.

(6) *Varieties of Biblical Interpretation*, by the Rev. L. Elliott Binns, D.D.

(7) *The Religious Value of Biblical Criticism*, by Professor F. C. Burkitt, D.D., F.B.A.

(8) *Scriptures, Creeds and Articles*, by Professor Bethune Baker, D.D., Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, Cambridge.

(9) *Myth and Miracle in the Bible*, by the Rev. J. S. Boys-Smith, M.A., Dean of St. John's College, Cambridge.

(10) *Inspiration and Prophecy*, by Professor C. E. Raven, D.D., Regius Professor of Divinity, Cambridge.

(11) *The origin, growth and adequacy of the Canon of the New Testament*, by Professor Foakes-Jackson, D.D.

(12) *The Bible in National Life*, by H. G. Wood, M.A., Director of Studies, Woodbrooke Settlement.

(13) *Christ and Criticism*, by Principal H. D. A. Major, D.D.

(14) *Modern Criticism and the Gospels*, by Canon Streeter, D.D., F.B.A., Provost of Queen's College, Oxford.

There would appear to be a widening gulf between the Bible and the modern man. From being what his Koran is to the devout Muslim, the Bible to-day is becoming what the Talmud was to the Christian scholar of last century—a quaint and curious product of Jewish religiosity, a vast heap of oyster shells in which a few moral and spiritual pearls may be discovered, but for which the modern man possesses neither the patience nor the perseverance to seek.

This situation is the result of the swing of the pendulum: the product of the over-valuation of the Bible by our early Victorian ancestors. They were taught to believe that it was 'the very pure word of God': that every syllable of it was inspired

by God Himself: that to doubt this was to be possessed of that 'evil heart of unbelief' which leads men to depart from the living God. Then there arose in rapid succession *The Origin of Species*, Bishop Colenso, *Essays and Reviews*, the works of the great German Biblical critics: the researches of Wm. Robertson Smith and the contributions of the hosts of his distinguished and undistinguished successors. As a result 'the public mind' became aware, that whatever the Bible might be, it could not be trusted any more as an infallible guide in the spheres of science and history.

That was quite enough for the average Englishman. The Bible was fallible, therefore it was not the Word of God, and as a consequence he need not trouble further about it. It was really a great relief to many to be assured on this point, because the Bible taught a doctrine of everlasting damnation which had helped to diminish the joy of life and had increased the horror of death.

Clear-headed and conscientious clergymen sought to show that there was a middle path between these two extremes of Biblical over-valuation and Biblical under-valuation, but their task was one of extreme difficulty. They were exposed to attacks on the one hand by the Biblical traditionalists and fundamentalists who regarded them as traitors to the Christian religion, and on the other hand they were exposed to an even more telling attack by secularists and agnostics who despised them as men who were misusing such knowledge as they possessed to bolster up religious beliefs and institutions which were checking the progress of mankind.

The Christian opponents of scientific secularism and of superstitious religion possessed, however, an intense conviction that both Reason and Religion must be given controlling positions in the guidance of human life and that whether or not it was possible to define the precise spheres of Religion and Reason, at least they must be brought into cordial co-operation.

The late Dr. Hastings Rashdall once said to the writer of this Preface: 'My position is one of intense difficulty, for I am on the right wing of the philosophers and I am on the left wing of the theologians, and my whole effort is to bring them together.'

If in the place of philosophers we put scientists and Biblical critics, and in the place of theologians we put the vast multitude of traditional Christians, the faith of whose fathers 'is good enough for them,' we have the practical task presented with which progressive Christian teachers are faced. That task is the bringing together of these two classes. The scientists must be brought to realize the essential part which religion, and to-day pre-eminently the Christian religion, can play in human development and human welfare and happiness. And on the other hand the simple religious believer, the charcoal burner, must be brought to realize that the right use of the reason is as essential to human salvation as is religious reverence and loyalty; that religious beliefs, however venerable and however widely held, which are proved at the bar of modern science and history to be untrue, must be discarded; that it is the duty of a religious man, not only to love God with religious emotion and moral conviction, but also with his mind purged from every form of superstition and error.

This plan of campaign as visualized by the enlightened Christian teacher is much more easy to outline than to accomplish in practice.

First, because what are called the assured results of scientific and historical criticism are by no means absolutely assured: in some cases the 'assured results' overshoot the truth: in many other cases they fall short of it. Moreover, there appears to be no finality in this work of historic and scientific research. As soon as the modern Christian teacher has achieved some kind of adjustment between the assured results of scientific truth and the fundamental conviction of Christian believers, he finds himself faced with a succession of fresh assured results and the process of making further adjustments has to be proceeded with. It is a most exhausting and faith-trying undertaking.

It is due of course to man living in an evolutionary creative process in which neither he himself nor anything else can stand still and in which he has to keep moving if he would keep alive. At rare intervals he has a Pisgah view of the promised land where faith and reason are for ever one—

> 'Of that same time when no more change shall be,
> But steadfast rest of all things firmly stay'd
> Upon the pillars of Eternity.'

But for the most part he seems to find himself engaged in a task of growing complexity, for with every advance in knowledge an increasing number of beliefs, dear to traditional Christians, appear to be shaken. Like the Psalmist he feels inclined to exclaim against the Disposer Supreme: 'The foundations have been cast down and what hath the righteous done?' Then in his despair he is cheered by the great vision of the writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*: 'Yet once more I shake not the earth but the heavens also, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.'

Nevertheless, as the process proceeds, it becomes increasingly evident that the number of things that can remain must be very few indeed. In other words, what is taking place points inevitably to a great and needful simplification of the Christian faith.

There is, however, one consolation, and that is that these few things are very large and really essential. Bishop Lightfoot used to say: That provided a few central truths were 'right and tight,' he was not concerned about the rest. But in taking this view he was very much ahead of many of his Christian contemporaries.

Here a second class of difficulties make themselves felt. These come not from the Scientists but from the traditionalist Christians. The creeds and devotional formularies, the prayers and hymns and practices of the Christian Church express belief in a number of the things that are shaken. They are perpetually reiterating and reaffirming these shaken things. Any proposal to abandon these shaken things arouses an intense fanatical conservatism which objects, not only to any alteration in these inherited formularies, but even any attempt to substitute simpler and truer expressions of Christian faith as optional alternatives. Yet while the Christian Church authorities maintain this rigid dogmatic intransigence, it is plain that an increasing number of modern-minded men and women are surrendering their membership in organized Christianity and are looking elsewhere than to the Christian Church for moral and spiritual leadership.

As a writer in *Punch* recently remarked:

> 'The conscience of England is not kept at Lambeth. It lies in commission between the Speaker of the House, the Dean of St. Paul's and the Editor of *Punch*.'

Punch's representative added, with a subtle humour which suggests that childish and debilitating superstition has to-day more potency than either the old keeper of conscience or the new, 'We surrender our claim to *Old Moore*.'

When the Christian Church, which is the appointed guardian of spiritual and moral truth, identifies its office with the protection of ancient traditional formularies in which obvious error is intermixed with essential truth, the bulk of the nation inevitably finds its refuge either in secularism or superstition. That is the state into which the English nation is steadily drifting to-day and the pertinent, not the impertinent, question of the modern Churchman is this: What is Lambeth doing about it?

The Bishop of Birmingham, at the opening meeting of the Modern Churchmen's Conference, addressed himself, as we should expect him to do, to the difficulties created by the present religious situation in England. Modernists were not to blame for this situation, though they often were blamed for it because they refused to allow ecclesiastical authorities to ignore it. Dr. Barnes affirmed, what we all know, whether we be members of the Upper House of Convocation or members of the Royal Society or much lesser persons:

> The progress of scientific knowledge and of critical scholarship had in recent decades led to vast changes of thought. There had grown up a new understanding alike of the way in which God acted through nature and man and of the trustworthiness and value of the Biblical narratives. This understanding was due to scholars and men of science working with no religious bias, but simply in the pursuit of truth. . . . Ultimately it must be disastrous for the Christian religion unless an adjustment is made which harmonizes the new understanding with the Christian faith.

The Bishop added:

> 'We (the Modernists) shall win because our work is needed.'

As individuals it is to be hoped that Modernists are indifferent as to whether they win or lose. Their concern is to carry out the task to which they are called—the adjustment of the ever-growing Christian faith with the ever-growing Kingdom of Science; and perhaps not to forget what Francis Bacon said: that the Kingdom of Science, like the Kingdom of God, is only entered by a little child.

Nevertheless, as members of the English Church we Modern Churchmen are concerned very seriously, not so much for the

fate, as for the usefulness of that body. Not a few Christian Churches, comprising many millions of members, in the last two thousand years of Christian history have had their candlesticks removed and have been replaced by other faiths or by none at all. Such a fate may overwhelm the Church of England and at no distant date. As Englishmen, we are concerned with the moral and spiritual needs of the English people. The English Church and the English Bible have been their moral and spiritual guides since the Reformation. Both Bible and Church to-day have lost much of their ancient beneficent influence for multitudes of our fellow-countrymen. This entails a lowering of moral and spiritual standards and a consequent vulgarization and secularization of national life.

The tragedy of the whole situation in this country is that there is really no need for this to be the case if only the Church, which according to its Articles, is 'a witness and a Keeper of Holy Writ,' had the courage and faith to simplify its theology in accordance with modern knowledge and to purge its formularies and liturgies of errors and superstitions.

Archbishop Cranmer, to whose liturgical genius we owe our prayer book, was determined that not only nothing untrue, but also nothing uncertain, should be permitted to find a place in the public services of the Church of England. That resolution cost him and his co-adjutors not only the loss of their bishoprics but also a fiery death in Broad Street, Oxford. Thomas Cranmer was not naturally a brave man, but he was a Christian man and recognized the absolute claim of Christian truth. He was also an enlightened scholar of the New Learning and was able, in consequence, to perceive to what a degree new truth had rendered ancient tradition erroneous.

Moreover, he felt it a duty to lead. The comfortable theory for those who occupy extremely responsible positions in Church and State that they must never move forward, unless shoved from behind, had not been invented in those days. Leaders were expected to lead. The judicious Hooker, in the spacious times of great Elizabeth, took his stand with those who would not basely through silence allow things to pass away as in a dream and so laid securely the foundations of English Church policy for three hundred years after his death. It is such wise and

courageous statesmanship, the product of enlightenment and candour, that the Church of England stands in dire need of to-day. It is only such statesmanship that can restore the Church and Bible to their true position of benign and needful influence in our national life. The Christian Church we know to-day is before all things a Spirit-bearing body. The Spirit which comes to it from Christ—a Spirit of faith, love, truth, freedom and courage. It is this life-giving Spirit which created the Church and has created all its institutions. And it is this Spirit which can alone re-create it to meet the needs and perform the tasks of each successive age. It is this Spirit which we see operating in the pages of the Old and New Testaments. He calls men to undertake tasks of moral and spiritual leadership in the face of opposition and persecution, and as they are loyal to that call they secure a deeper and truer insight into the nature and will of God.

THE USE AND MISUSE OF THE BIBLE

By the Very Rev. W. R. Inge, K.C.V.O., D.D., F.B.A.

THE Presidential Address is intended to open the Conference by introducing some of the various subjects which are to be dealt with in detail by the readers of papers. It is often attended by many who cannot be present during the whole course, and it should aim at a popular treatment. I cannot avoid trespassing on ground which has been allotted to other speakers.

My subject is 'The Use and Misuse of the Bible.' The Bible, says Jülicher, is the most influential book that was ever written. This is obviously true. One cannot seriously compare with it the influence of the Koran or the Vedas, or of Homer, or Shakespeare. It has deeply coloured the whole of European civilization, and of its offshoots beyond the seas. The history of the Jews would have been very different without their sacred literature. The great modern languages owe much to writers steeped in the Bible. Dante created modern Italian; Luther modern German; the Authorised Version modern English. We use scores of Biblical phrases, often forgetting their origin. The style and manner of many great writers are full of Biblical reminiscences — Milton, Bunyan, Goethe, Ruskin, and particularly orators like Bright and the American, Abraham Lincoln. On European law the book has had a great and not always salutary influence. We remember the unfortunate texts, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live,' and 'Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be.' In such questions as divorce, marriage with a sister-in-law, and the weekly day of rest, the influence of the Bible is obvious. The scriptures have meant and still mean more to us than Homer meant to the Greeks.

How did this body of literature grow and attain its immense prestige? It was not supposed to have dropped from heaven, like the Koran. There is no unity of date or authorship or doctrine. The title *τὰ βίβλια*, 'the rolls,' is of course a neuter plural, though the Latins came to regard it as a feminine singular.

The Old Testament is the poetry-book of the Hebrews. The earliest parts contain fragments of ancient songs, religious and patriotic. Some of these seem to have been collected in anthologies, like the Book of Jasher and the Book of the Wars of the Lord. These are embedded in continuous historical prose narratives, astonishingly mature in thought and treatment when we consider their probable dates. We are told that the J portion of the Pentateuch belongs to the Southern Kingdom; the E portion, which is believed to be rather later, to the Northern Kingdom. Perhaps it was after the fall of Samaria, about 721 B.C., that the two were combined into one narrative. The 'Priest's Code' is said to belong to the fifth century. The Pentateuch as we know it was not complete till the time of Ezra.

It was the prophets who mainly determined the lines on which the national history should run. The canonized prophets undoubtedly represent only a fragment of a much larger body of literature, and those which survive are often in a very chaotic state. But they are of immense value, and quite unique. The earlier prophets had great political importance. A prophet justified the separation of Israel and Judah. Elijah sternly opposed the policy of recognizing the Phoenician Baals. Elisha encouraged the rebellion of Jehu. Jeremiah resisted in vain the ruinous policy of the later kings. In religion, the prophet was an innovation, and the preacher of a more spiritual and more moral religion than that of the priests, who then as always were the custodians of tradition and of institutional worship and beliefs. The prophets were not, first and foremost, proclaimers of history before the event; their message was to their own generation. But the Hebrew philosophy of religion, if we may use such a word of a very unmetaphysical race, was rooted in history. Unlike the Greeks, they were not afraid to throw their ideals into the future, which Bosanquet tells us is 'the death of all sane idealism.' For them, and especially for their prophets, insight takes the form of foresight, and like all prophets, down to our own day, they foreshortened their visions of the things to come hereafter. 'The day of the Lord,' or 'the kingdom of God,' was not placed in any Platonic timeless ideal world, but in the near future, and, for the most part, in Palestine. And yet the prophets, like our Lord Himself, tried to wean the people from hoping for

a speedily approaching political deliverance. 'Wherefore would ye have the day of the Lord?' cries Amos, who is probably the earliest of the literary prophets whose writings have come down to us. 'Wherefore would ye have the day of the Lord? It is darkness and not light.' They could not hold out much hope for the recovery of the nation as a whole, which, as they saw it, had forfeited its claim to the protection of Jehovah by its disloyalty and social injustice. 'A remnant,' not the whole people, would be saved. A still bolder vision came to Jeremiah, one of the greatest of the sons of Israel. Even if the old covenant should be broken, even if the Holy City should be laid waste, a new covenant would replace the old, and a spiritual kingdom in which all, from the greatest to the least, should know God. In the Second Isaiah, Jehovah, it is predicted, shall be acknowledged as the Lord of the whole earth, not of the chosen people only.

After the reforms under Josiah, the national function of prophecy necessarily declined, and prophecy began to take its later form as apocalyptic. But there was no such 'period of silence' as used to be assumed. For us, the message of the prophets consists mainly in their insistence that God is one, that He is a God of righteousness, mercy, and justice; that He looketh on the heart, not on the outward appearance; that He is not to be propitiated by sacrifice and ritual, but by a just, holy, and pure life; and that though hope may often have to die in order to live, yet no pure hope can ever wither, except that a purer may grow out of its roots.

The 'Law and the Prophets' was, as we know, a common name in the time of our Lord for the inspired scriptures. But besides the Law and the Prophets there was the Hagiographa, the Psalms, the Wisdom Literature, and other books.

The Psalms are the hymn-book of the Jewish *Church*, not of the Hebrew nation. Some are almost certainly pre-exilic, but many of them are comparatively very late. It is important to realize this, because there are just a few passages in the Psalms, as in Psalm 73, which imply a belief in a future life. Now one of the most remarkable things in Hebrew religion is the very late date at which 'the blessed hope of everlasting life' began to dawn upon the Jews. The whole of the Old Testament, one may almost say, is devoted to the problem of Divine justice. 'Shall

not the judge of all the earth do right?' asks Abraham near the beginning of our Bible. He has no doubt of the answer. And yet—how difficult a thing it is to believe! So every possible solution is tried in turn. The unit is the family, or the nation, not the individual. The good man is tried for a time, but God will not 'suffer his bones to be broken.' Or possibly he may have sinned in a previous state—this was a rather late notion, I think. But the extension of Jehovah's jurisdiction over the shadowy realm of Sheol came very late. The resurrection of the righteous was a postulate of the belief that God, after all, must be just, when His justice seemed impossible to assert confidently on any other hypothesis. The Jewish belief in immortality, when at last it partially established itself, was a religious belief. It was not founded on animism or necromancy. This is true also of the Christian belief; it would be well if this were not sometimes forgotten even now.

The value of the Psalms is incomparable. Some of you may have read Lord Ernle's book, *The Psalms in Human Life*, which proves how these Jewish hymns have consoled and fortified countless men and women, of all nations and in all the centuries, in all the changes and chances of mortal life. And yet we are frequently reminded that they are after all pre-Christian. The Jew was a terrible hater; he often is so still. There is an Oriental ferocity about many of the Psalms which makes them quite unfit for use in public worship. They are not recited in the Synagogues now. I can never forget the debate in Convocation about leaving out the cursing psalms. One well-known member of the Lower House defended them on the ground that they expressed our justifiable feelings towards the Germans. Another said that he thought every well-instructed Christian knew that they referred exclusively to our spiritual enemies. He did not explain how we can dash the children of our spiritual enemies against the stones.

The Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus are collections of popular aphorisms, which assume the existence of God, and that honesty is the best policy. They ignore the Temple, the priesthood, and prophecy. Many of the sayings are admirably wise and sensible, but the spiritual temperature is rather low, and the appeal to reasonable calculation is sometimes almost ludicrous.

Job, which is now dated about 400 B.C., contains the finest poetry of the Old Testament. It is mutilated and interpolated (the Elihu chapters seem to be by a different hand), and it leads to no conclusion in the debate as to how God can be just, for the restitution of the patriarch's fortunes at the end seems to us little more than an ironical finale.

Daniel, which was almost certainly written in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, is an early example of apocalyptic literature. It is deservedly popular, but not as history.

Ruth is post-exilic — a very charming 'pastoral symphony.'

Jonah stands by itself among the minor prophets. It belongs probably to the third or fourth century before Christ, and has no historical value. It is really a noble protest against Jewish exclusiveness. The mission of the Jewish people is to spread knowledge of the truth among the Gentile peoples.

Of Esther it is enough to say that it is a very interesting story, and that the name of God is not mentioned in it. The primary object was to provide justification for the popular feast of Purim, which, like our harvest thanksgiving, was unauthorised. History knows nothing of Mordecai, Esther, or Vashti, and if Mordecai was one of the exiles carried to Babylon in 597, he must have been about one hundred and twenty years old in the reign of Xerxes, and his beautiful cousin Esther, who captivated Xerxes, well over a hundred.

The Song of Solomon also never mentions the name of God. It is not a religious book at all, but a collection of love-lyrics, probably to be sung at marriages. It was not written by Solomon, nor has it anything to do with 'Christ and His Church.' That need not prevent us from appreciating the sometimes beautiful applications of it made by the medieval mystics.

The Old Testament Canon was not closed much before our Lord's time — indeed not definitely till about 100 A.D. But the Jews for the most part did not put the other books quite on the same level as 'the Law and the Prophets.' It was a very bold thing when Christ said, 'It was said to them of old time — but I say unto you,' something different.

'Apocryphal' meant at first esoteric, withdrawn from public use. There might be various reasons for this refusal, perhaps unconnected with the value of the book. Our Apocrypha was at

last rejected by the Jews, who were followed by Origen and Jerome; the Alexandrian Church admitted several of these books. The Reformed Churches adopted the Jewish Canon; I think I am right in saying that the Bible Society does not print the Apocrypha. The Roman Church is more liberal in this instance, and now affirms the full inspiration of the apocryphal books. Our Lord's Bible was the Hebrew Bible as recognized by the Rabbis, including the Psalms and Daniel; St. Paul's was the Greek Bible, including (*e.g.*) the Wisdom of Solomon.

The attitude of Christ to the Old Testament is of course very important to Christians. He did not regard its authority as final, since He claimed to supersede it in some details. He even said, 'The Law and the Prophets were until John,' *i.e.* the Baptist, as if a new dispensation had already begun. He also condemned the traditional interpretation of the Law by the scribes, who, He said, 'make the word of God of no effect by their tradition.' This traditional interpretation He found to be sometimes petty and foolish, sometimes unreasonably burdensome, and sometimes (as in the passage about 'Corban') actually demoralizing. And yet He regards the book as sacred and divinely inspired, and (if we may trust a verse in St. Matthew) even declares that no detail of the Law can be abrogated, 'till all be fulfilled.' Among the modifications which He makes in the old Law we may mention the wide extension of the commandments which forbid murder, adultery, and the taking of God's name in vain; the stricter law of divorce; and, I think we may add, the refusal to invoke divine vengeance upon evildoers. How far He followed the then prevalent interpretation of inspiration as divine dictation is not easy to say. But we are certainly not obliged to think that He has settled the authenticity of the story of Lot's wife, nor that David wrote the hundred and tenth Psalm, which probably belongs to the Maccabean period. His dislike of the scribes and their teaching is what we might expect from a prophet, and it was as a prophet that our Lord lived, preached, and died.

The superstition about verbal inspiration is Jewish. There was a queer story about the composition of the Septuagint; how the translators worked separately, and produced translations word for word alike. The Christian Church ended by teaching

the verbal inerrancy of the whole Bible, though Origen held a surprisingly liberal theory of inspiration, even in speaking of the Gospels. The Reformed Churches, or some of them, for Luther permitted himself to pick and choose, scorning, for example, the Epistle of St. James as 'an epistle of straw,' were on the whole more rigid than the Church of Rome, but there was not much to choose between them. I was brought up in a Tractarian family, and the High Church party even then was supposed to be less uncompromising about inspiration than the Evangelicals; but I was certainly taught that the whole Bible was literally true. This theory, which the Americans call fundamentalism, is held in all its strictness in out of the way parts of the United States, as was shown by the famous trial at Dayton, Tennessee, where the population is mainly a very fine farming stock, most of them of pure English descent. It was at this trial that Mr. Bryan, the democratic candidate for the Presidency, was cross-examined. 'Mr. Bryan, do you believe that Jonah was swallowed by a whale?' 'I do, because the Bible says so.' 'And if the Bible told you that it was Jonah who swallowed the whale, would you believe that?' 'I should.'

One expedient to escape some of these absurdities was the theory of mystical interpretation, which had already been employed by the Greeks in rationalizing and moralizing their myths. Sometimes this treatment was almost forced on the clergy by the custom of preaching on the Old Testament, chapter by chapter. Much of the voluminous commentaries of the Fathers of the Church, which have so strangely been allowed to survive when a large proportion of the literary treasures of classical antiquity has been lost, was homiletic exposition of this kind. If a man had to preach about the wars of Joshua, what could he do but explain that Sehon King of the Amorites and Og the King of Basan were not kings but vices? The queer science of number-symbolism was freely employed. I do not know where Bishop Christopher Wordsworth found his explanation of the 153 fishes in St. John's Gospel. They are either the square of the Twelve Apostles plus the square of the Holy Trinity, or the year of Jubilee multiplied by three, plus three. This Bishop was a mathematician as well as a classic, so perhaps he made this calculation for himself. There is a great deal

of queer allegorism in Philo. But the 'typology' of St. Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews is, I think, neither Rabbinic nor Philonic.

It is a great pity that for readers of the Bible the history of Israel seems to come to an end about four hundred years before the Incarnation of Christ. We know that some of the Old Testament literature is so late that there is no long gap between the Old and New Testaments. But there seems to be a gap, and so there is a loss of continuity between the old covenant and the new. We miss any account of the training of the people by the Law, now completed and given State authority. We miss the transformation of prophecy into apocalypse. We miss the downfall of Persia and the conquests of Alexander the Great, which changed the face of the whole eastern world. We miss the consequent infiltration of Greek ideas, which even the stubbornly conservative Jews could not altogether resist; we miss the rising of the Maccabees, which changed Jerusalem into a priest-state, a type of which there were other examples in the Near East. It was really a period of important religious progress; for example, the belief in a future life for individuals then first took root among the Jews. It follows that an intelligent reader of the Bible ought to know something not only about the Old and New Testaments, but about the period which lies between them. Archdeacon Charles' books are very useful, and no Bible reader ought to omit parts of the Apocrypha, least of all the Wisdom of Solomon, a noble prose poem in which Greek and Jewish ideas are blended very instructively.

But it is time to turn to the New Testament, which to a Christian is so immensely more important than the Old that one sometimes half regrets that Marcion's wish to have a wholly Christian Bible was not fulfilled. But the Church was quite right. The Semitic contribution to Christianity is quite indispensable. A completely Hellenised religion would have been very insecurely attached to the original Gospel.

Neither the Evangelists nor St. Paul thought of their writings being Volume II of the Jewish Scriptures. St. Paul's letters, which are the earliest part of the New Testament, were dictated by him to churches which he had founded himself or for which he felt himself responsible. He had not visited Rome

when he wrote his great Epistle to the Romans, and it does not appear that he founded the church of Colossae. Philemon is a private letter such as good-natured men were often asked to write, to intercede for a runaway slave, who was liable to be crucified. I will not enter into the vexed question of the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles, nor of Ephesians, which if read in English seems thoroughly Pauline, but the Greek style is not much like that of St. Paul's other writings. The letters are a little like the pastoral charges of our bishops. Hebrews, one of the most precious books in the New Testament (the late Dr. Walter Lock said that he would rather lose any one other book in the New Testament than Hebrews), is a homily written by a scholar for scholars, but with a definite situation in mind. Those to whom the writer sent it — I am inclined to think that they were mainly converted Jews — were tempted on the one hand to lose heart because the expected return of Christ had not occurred, and on the other to revert to liberal Judaism or Unitarianism under fear of persecution. The writer has done for Faith and Hope what St. Paul in I *Cor.* xiii had done for Charity. Of the minor Epistles, I *Peter* may conceivably be genuine, but it is much more probable that it represents the teaching, half-way between St. Paul and Judaic Christianity, which we may suppose was the standpoint of Peter. II *Peter* is a second century forgery. It uses *Jude*, a homily written in very bad Greek. *James* reads like an encyclical; it represents a Jewish, un-Pauline, presentation of Christianity, but it is very far from deserving Luther's contempt. I *John* is a pastoral letter, evidently closely connected with the Fourth Gospel; II *John* a brief address to a church, III *John* a private letter. The Apocalypse, which was rejected by the Church of Alexandria, was only just admitted into the Canon. It may even be a Jewish work, to which the author or editor has added a Christian introduction and appendix, and a few interpolations. The date of the book as we have it is very uncertain. We may put it as between 80 and 96.

I have not time to discuss the Gospels at length. I will only say that it seems to me likely that each of the Synoptics was the favourite Gospel of some one great church, and that for this reason all were admitted on an equal footing. You may take it

as certain — very few scholars hold a different view — that the Fourth Gospel was written, not by the Son of Zebedee, who was probably martyred by the Jews, as our Lord seems to have foretold, but by an unknown Christian of Ephesus, between 100 and 115 A.D. It is also plain to the unbiassed reader that it is not a biography in our sense, but an interpretation of the significance of the Incarnation to the world, addressed to the third generation of Christians. It is what Origen called a 'spiritual gospel,' *i.e.* a mystical treatise, in which allegory and symbolism and cryptic arrangements of numbers, chiefly 7 and 3, have an important part. Whether any independent historical tradition lies behind it is a disputed question.

The *Acts*, in spite of Loisy, is probably based on real historical investigation, honestly used. The earlier speeches represent a very undeveloped Christology, and are interesting on that account. In devotional reading we may remember that it has been called the Gospel of the Holy Ghost. The teaching about the operations of the Holy Spirit, all through the book, is very instructive.

From the third century the title 'the Law of God' was applied to the whole Bible. The dominant theory was that the writers were only amanuenses of the Holy Spirit. Exegesis was for the most part utterly uncritical. To give one example only. The first words of Genesis, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,' was explained 'God created the heavens and the earth in the *Arche*,' the Beginning, *i.e.* in the Word or Second Person of the Trinity.

In the churches, continuous reading of the books of the Bible from beginning to end was customary (*lectio continua*); but *Acta Sanctorum* and other edifying books were read in church as well as the Bible. Until the Middle Ages, I think we may suppose that the majority of the congregations understood the language in which the Bible was read. Expository sermons, I think, gradually ceased to be customary. Private reading (the ancients generally read aloud, even when alone) was common until the illiteracy of the Dark Ages. It was revived in the thirteenth century; but of course it was the discovery of printing that made the Bible the people's book. When the Hussites, Albigenses and Lollards based their teaching on the Bible, the

Church officials tried to take it out of the hands of the laity. Even as late as 1864, Pius IX condemned Bible Societies, along with Communism, Freemasonry, *et eiusmodi pestes*. I believe the majority of Roman Catholics to-day are almost incredibly ignorant of the Bible. In the Protestant Churches Bible reading has always been encouraged, and not only in England, though perhaps our countrymen, until the present century, were specially distinguished by the knowledge of the Scriptures. It is interesting that Bismarck read the Bible every day.

We all know that there has been a great change in this matter during the last thirty or forty years. In my young days one found a copy of the Bible not only in every guest-room in private houses, but in many hotel bedrooms. 'A chapter' was read by most religious people either in private or in family prayers. Old-fashioned Evangelical clergymen like Webb-Peploe used to quote long passages of Scripture in their extempore sermons, and often gave the chapter and verse from memory. But when I became an examining chaplain I found that even the young men from the theological colleges were very badly grounded in the Bible, and in one party in the Church contemptuous language about it is sometimes heard. It is a great pity; for an intelligent and devout use of the Bible is a valuable part of education, and no other book can take its place.

At the same time, I do not wish to seem to advocate a return to the old uncritical and undiscriminating use of the Scriptures. Much of the Old Testament has very little religious value for us to-day, and we are so far removed from the manner of living and from the thoughts of the ancient Hebrews that a great part of their sacred literature is really unintelligible to the ordinary English reader. Much harm has been done, and much infidelity manufactured, by the untenable attitude which many old-fashioned people still suppose to be obligatory upon Christians in dealing with the Old Testament. I think extracts from it are better than the whole book. I have never felt happy in teaching children the so-called historical books. They contain attractive stories, delightfully told; but how much they contain which is by no means wholesome reading! In teaching our own children, we concentrated upon the Gospels, and gave them very few lessons from the Old Testament.

In reading the Gospels, a good commentary (there are many good commentaries) is very desirable. The old 'harmonies of the four Evangelists' belong to a discredited view of inspiration. The four Gospels should be read separately; and it is worth while to remember that Mark is the oldest. The attentive reader will soon notice that Matthew and Luke have each their own characteristics. St. Luke was a warm-hearted man, with a deep sympathy for the poor. Christian Socialists find most of their texts in this Gospel. He also emphasises our Lord's welcome to publicans, Samaritans, and Gentiles. We do not know from what source he took the exquisite parables which are found in this Gospel only.

In St. Matthew on the other hand we find, it would seem, a Jew of Palestine, whose sources are the lost Gospel usually called Q, after the German *Quelle*, a source, and our Mark. The continuity of the old and new covenants is precious to him. He revels in fulfilled prophecies, and makes the Jewish background of our Lord's teaching more apparent than either Mark or Luke. But he also shows us how the original Gospel began very early to develop into Catholicism. He is the only evangelist to use the word 'Ecclesia.' There are therefore two strands in this Gospel. He likes to see in the coming of Christ the consummation of the old Law — Bishop Gore says, wrongly, I think, that even the Sermon on the Mount is Law rather than Grace; but also he is a strong churchman, a proto-Catholic.

The interest of St. Paul's epistles is inexhaustible. The sources and composition of the Synoptic Gospels present many difficulties to the critic; but most of St. Paul's epistles are certainly his own from beginning to end. We also know more about the man, from his own writings, than we know about any other character of antiquity except Marcus Tullius Cicero. And a very noble character it is, though some have found it unattractive. There has been some danger of the real Paul being buried under Paulinism; but in the present century there have been several good books about him. He was not a theological professor, elaborating difficult doctrines about grace and justification. There is no 'system' in his writings, and his views changed considerably in the few years which comprise all his extant works. He was first and foremost a travelling missionary, like

George Fox or John Wesley, though he was intellectually far above either of them.

I recommend reading St. Paul's epistles carefully and continuously, but in their chronological order, which is not that of our New Testament. In the earliest, I *Thessalonians*, we have the simple, primitive expectation that Jesus will shortly return to earth in power as the Messiah. This was part of the Pharisaic tradition, and it was the belief of the apostolic circle. In the central group, containing the four great epistles, the Christology is more complex. The idea of Christ as the generic archetypal man is not easy for us to understand, though at this time it meant much to St. Paul as an explanation of the Atonement. All through his writings he seems to be feeling his way from a Christology of apotheosis to one of incarnation, but he never quite reaches the Johannine doctrine. Equally important is the movement away from apocalyptic Messianism towards the mystical doctrine of Christ, or the Holy Spirit who represents Him, already immanent in the heart of the believer. The contrast is no longer between the world which now is and that which is to come, but the Greek, the Platonic, contrast between the things which are seen and are temporal, and the things which are not seen and are eternal. You will soon see if you read St. Paul sympathetically, that the vital centre of his faith is not any scholastic doctrine, but his personal experience of the indwelling Christ. 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' It is worth while to collect and meditate on the passages in which the apostle gives expression to this his innermost conviction. For the testimony of the saints to their communion with God is the strongest evidence we have, or can have, that our faith is not vain. Of all the epistles, II *Corinthians* reveals most of the apostle's life and character; it is impossible to read it without deep sympathy for a man so cruelly tried and so persistently misrepresented. I *Corinthians* contains much administrative detail, full of interest as throwing light on the inner condition of one of the most important among St. Paul's infant Churches. Philippians is a very attractive letter, full of affection for a Church which apparently gave the apostle less anxiety than most of the others. *Colossians* and *Ephesians* give us the most developed and most philosophic form of St. Paul's teaching,

where he approaches most nearly to the Fourth Gospel. The doctrine of Ephesians seems to me practically identical with that of Colossians, but it must be admitted that the Greek style is so unlike that of the other epistles as to throw some doubt on its authenticity.

I have already told you how much I treasure the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is, I think, especially helpful at a time of disillusionment like the present, when the hopes which we cherished for a happy state of human society are, at least for the time being, disappointed. The circumstances under which the Epistle was written were not very dissimilar, and the writer deals with them in a way which is permanently valuable.

But we all have our favourites. Some find the Psalms more helpful than the New Testament. Some have their favourite Gospel or Epistle; a few even love that strange book the *Apocalypse*. But however we study the Bible, let it be as part of our prayers. Remember that remarkable passage in *St. James*, about being doers of the word and not hearers only. The word of God, he seems to say, is like a mirror which shows us, not God's face but our own, 'the face of our genesis,' the man or woman that God meant us to be. 'Look on this picture and on this' it seems to say to us. But a man must not be 'a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh,' when he has looked upon 'the perfect law, the law of liberty.' The most useful part of ordinary reading is when we put the book down and think about it. The most useful part of Bible reading is when we put the book down and pray about it.

THE EVOLUTION OF RELIGION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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EVOLUTION has long been claimed as a dominant and characteristic term by science; but the word is often used in a very unscientific sense. It may mean the unrolling of some hidden principle, 'from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous'; or a mere description of successive changes. Evolution is not necessarily the same thing when applied to the literature of a race as when applied to its religion. The study of a religion cannot dispense with that of its accompanying literature, though the literature will seldom be our only material; but it is the dominant character of the religion that we must in every case try to reach, and not its changing expression in the literature.

The modern conception of the history and evolution of the Old Testament literature may be said to date from 1876, when the first volume of Wellhausen's *History of Israel*, as Peake once put it, 'struck the decisive blow.' Long before him, the composite character of the books of Moses had been suspected by Jean Astruc (1753). But it was Wellhausen, working on the results of Reuss (1833), Vatke (1835) and Graf (1835), who challenged the world of Old Testament scholarship with the three sufficiently surprising propositions that the Prophets came before the Priestly Law, that the Pentateuch was a combination of at least four different documents, and that the 'law' or *torah* was to be studied in three (or four) separate codes. These views were as passionately attacked, in this country at least, as Darwin's views on the origin of species in the sixties and seventies of the last century. Robertson Smith was deposed from his position in the Scottish Church for advocating them. The triumph of the theory may be said to have been gained, for England, with the publication of Sanday's Bampton Lectures on *Inspiration*, delivered in Oxford in 1892, following on Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (First

Edition, 1891). Since then, there has been no serious opposition in quarters where opposition was likely to count for much; and all subsequent Old Testament study, so far from shaking that theory, has found that it could only proceed by making the Wellhausen view its starting-point and pre-supposition.

The three propositions set forth above provide a simple and broad outline of religious evolution. The attention given to the subject, and in certain directions its results through the last forty years, have been enormous; and it will be useful, in order to form some idea of the extent and direction of Old Testament literature, as our present-day knowledge entitles us to speak of it, to cast a glance over the work that has been done in this period.

We can do this best by dividing the subject under three heads — literary criticism, anthropology, archaeology; we shall then be able to survey and estimate the additions to our knowledge of the Old Testament and the religious ideas of which it is still the most conspicuous expression, since we learnt to read it with the eyes of Wellhausen.

I.

A survey of the literary study of the documents will show how much industry has been expended on it and with what positive achievements. There is indeed only one position that can be said to have been definitely and finally gained since Sanday's book, and that is (*a*) the detection of what is known as Trito-Isaiah (*Is.* 56-66). That the last eleven chapters of Isaiah form a separate prophecy or collection of prophecies is not even hinted at in Sanday or in Driver. To-day, it is universally recognized that there is a break at the end of ch. 55, and that the subsequent chapters represent a later stage or stages of Hebrew religious life and thought (*cf.* Volz, *Jesaia* II, 1931). When these stages should be dated is a different matter; some would place them in the century after the return from exile; others at the time of the Samaritan Schism, which itself has been connected with Ezra or with the time of Alexander the Great; others would place chs. 61-66 before chs. 56-60. All that as yet is certain is that the separation must be made.

(*b*) A good deal of attention has been paid to the analysis of the earlier documents of the Pentateuch. We may notice here a parallel to the study of the Synoptists, which has led us from Mk. and Q to four sources, or along the rather devious lines sketched out by the *formgeschichtliche* school. Eissfeldt has found a third document, L, by the side of J and E, where several before him had felt the necessity of admitting two strands in J; and the presence of the documents has been traced on into Judges, Samuel and Kings. There has also been a tendency to emphasize the separate and independent character of the several (and brief) sections of narrative.

(*c*) A similar method has been applied to the Prophets (here again we have an interesting parallel to Synoptic study) by T. H. Robinson and others, who have seen in the prophetic texts, earlier and later, a series of separate oracles, bursts, as it were, of inspired utterance.

(*d*) Gunkel has devoted much attention to the *Gattungen* or literary affinities of the Psalms, much as R. G. Moulton from a more purely literary standpoint urged the importance of the literary study of the Bible fifty years ago. This has meant suggestions for re-dating, none of which have been generally felt to be convincing.

(*e*) A more elaborate study of the Psalms has been carried out by Mowinckel. He holds that a number of the Psalms are liturgical compositions for the ritual of Jahveh's ceremonial ascent of his throne in the First Temple (or earlier), but retouched or 'bowdlerized' by the piety and orthodoxy of a later age. Kennett, on the other hand, would put the majority of the Psalms (especially those which refer to the king) into the Maccabean Age at the earliest. It is obvious that when the king may be either an actual pre-exilic monarch or a Maccabean potentate or an idealized figure, we are on shifting ground.

(*f*) Part of the Wellhausen view, as is well known, is that the Deuteronomic code is to be identified with the law which Josiah introduced in 621, including the confinement of sacrifices to Jerusalem. Recently this identification has been called in question. As in the case of some of the Psalms, one writer, Dr.

Welch, would place the bulk of the code much earlier, in the time of Solomon; others, like Dr. Kennett, much later, after the return from exile. Kennett indeed would go further, and would regard both J and E as manifestos of religious parties after the exile in North or South Israel. All this demands further study. It cannot be lightly urged that the two views cancel one another out. But their authors have hardly appreciated the confusion which, if accepted, they would introduce into our whole conception of the history of Israel's religious growth.

(*g*) Within the last few years the German scholar Hölscher and the American Dr. Torrey have considered afresh what was long felt to be perplexing, the union of two elements in the character and sympathies of Ezekiel — prophetic and priestly; and they have followed, quite independently, the simple method of separating them, assigning the first to the period of the monarchy, and the second to the development of Judaism after the exile. But here also the Gordian knot, when cut with the critical sword, has a way of twisting itself up again.

(*h*) More formidable is Dr. Torrey's whole criticism of the exilic period, especially of the age of Ezra and Nehemiah. The exiles who returned in 532, he holds, were a mere handful. Ezra he believes to have come back after Nehemiah — at least two generations later; if indeed Ezra existed at all. The Samaritan Schism did not take place till much later, about 330. There is a growing agreement with the first two propositions; the third (Ezra's non-existence) has not been so successful in winning assent; for the fourth there is a great deal to be said. But, although a distinct modification of Wellhausen's view that P was promulgated in 445 by Ezra, Torrey's theory has not shaken Wellhausen's main contentions.

(*i*) It has been realized a good deal more clearly of late that the *Torah* is not a matter simply of three (or four) codes. Each contains much older material; perhaps, as we shall see later, the oldest material may be embodied in the latest code.

It will thus be seen that the actual study of the last forty years, save on *Is.* 56-66, has been singularly devoid of assured results. Indeed, the Wellhausen position may well be called orthodox, and others besides conservatives will be tempted to

say, 'when you travel outside orthodoxy, you find yourself placed on uncertain ground,' like Cleon's three books on the soul,

> Proving absurd all written hitherto,
> And putting us to ignorance again.

Outside the Wellhausen propositions, any view of the history (to say nothing of the evolution) of Old Testament literature is so uncertain, that no conception of the evolution of religion can be founded on it.

II.

As regards Anthropology, a fascinating book on the Old Testament appeared about fifteen years ago, from the indefatigable pen of Sir J. G. Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament*. He there pointed out how many customs referred to in the Old Testament books (earlier and later), such as the ordeal and the scapegoat, had their analogues in savage practices all over the world. Long before this, writers on Hebrew religion, like Stade and Smend, had shown how much that is described (and not always criticised) in the Old Testament as taking place among the Hebrews is nothing else than what, outside the Old Testament, would be called sheer heathenism. From this it would seem to follow that, save for some few beliefs of uncertain origin, the older Hebrews were little better than what would now be called animists. Wellhausen himself had laid stress on the similarities between many of these practices and those of the pre-Islamic Arabs. Some of them quickly died out; others were vigorously protested against by the prophets and sternly forbidden by the law-givers; others again were received, 'circumcized' as it were, into the Hebrew codes; with modifications, like the laws of forbidden food, or whole-heartedly, like the ritual of the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement, or the provisions for the purifying of the leper or the leprous house, or the clearing of the suspected wife.

But we must be careful how we use these interesting facts as materials for studying the evolution of the religion of Israel. If we are asked to conclude from them that the early Hebrews were polytheists and believers in magic, we shall do so without scruple. But if we are told that, because of this, the religion of Israel was originally polytheistic and magical, we shall hesitate.

We must first decide what we mean by the religion of Israel. If we mean a conglomeration or hodge-podge of all the beliefs about the unseen that were held at any time by the Hebrew invaders of Palestine, we can doubtless call it polytheistic. But we shall have to call it many other things as well. Polytheism tarried till a late age among the Hebrews; and indeed it can be said to exist still in modern Europe. But if by the religion of the Hebrews or of the Old Testament we mean a conception of God and the world which was characteristic of the Hebrews or the Old Testament, we shall modify our language. There can be no evolution of a mere conglomeration. Evolution implies some definite organism or quasi-organism to evolve, and the service of anthropology to such a study is to point out how, in the midst of an environment alien or hostile, that religion gradually manifested itself in clearer forms and more definite and articulated functions.

III.

In the realm of Archaeology, a different picture is presented. Since Wellhausen, the whole shape of the ancient world has changed. In his day we knew something of certain periods in the history of Egypt and Babylon; for the rest, the world before 1000 B.C., the time of David, was a blank. Now we can trace the history of both Egypt and Babylon from the middle of the fourth millennium before Christ; we already know much of the history of the other great powers both in the Near East and Greece (Hittites, Mitanni, Cretans, Myceneans), and the spade of the excavator has given us a knowledge of Palestine that might almost be called intimate, from long before the days of Abraham's migration from Ur. In particular, the Code of Hammurabi, the Tel-el-Amarna letters, the excavation of numbers of Palestinian sites, the Israelite inscriptions from Samaria and elsewhere, the papyri from the Jewish colony at Elephantine, and the more recently discovered remains at Ras-Shamra, have poured a flood of light on the whole domain of the Old Testament, and far outside, from long before Joshua to long after Judas Maccabeus.

Various attempts have been made, quite naturally, to trace some specific influences, from one ethnic source or another, on

the religion of Israel. Fr. Delitzsch and A. Jeremias led a host of allies in deriving (so the catchword ran) the Bible from Babel or Babylon. More recently, and on the strength of Egyptian documents newly come to light, Egyptologists, such as Jahuda and Breasted, in their different ways, have endeavoured to show that much which we thought the characteristic vintage of Hebrew wisdom had been planted and gathered on the banks of the Nile. Similarly, S. A. Cook has been advising us to turn to the beliefs implied by the Tel-el-Amarna tablets for light on the faith of Israel. All this, however, for students of the evolution of Old Testament religion, is mostly beside the mark. It is worse. It implies that there was no such thing as a religion of the Hebrews. Indeed, it is really urging that the religion of that inconsiderable and yet quite extraordinarily important people, the Hebrews, was composed of blocks or chunks borrowed from the valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates and elsewhere, and somehow incorporated into what was not much better than before (perhaps not so good), and yet that it survived when those older systems, the mighty causes of the tiny result, had been laid in the dust of oblivion. It may be so. But if it is so, we shall have to give up talking about evolution; and we shall have to recognize the emergence of a new and very perplexing problem in religious history. If on the other hand we can find something, as we have already hinted, that is characteristic of the religion of Israel, all these archaeological results will be of the greatest importance, not as sources, but as environment. And when we talk of environment, we must remember that, as in physical evolution, the evolving organism is not simply passive in the face of environment. Environment is used; it is even subdued; it becomes not the master but the servant.

We should do injustice to Old Testament scholarship if we left unmentioned, first the mass of commentaries and histories which have criticized and embodied these various results, for particular books and periods and for the Old Testament as a whole, and second the wealth of studies of special subjects in the Old Testament, sacrifice, kingship, the Servant Songs, the Paradise story, the remains of popular poetry in the Old Testament, the Jewish Temple, the date of the Exodus, the development of the cult, and so on. For our purposes, however, they have in

the main but two results; one negative, the other positive. They leave unanswered the question, What was it that, surrounded by the welter of beliefs, practices, cults, and civilizations, actually evolved and developed? And when we distinguish between relatively assured results and ingenious and attractive theories, we are led back to the territory that Wellhausen and his school first opened up to us; before the prophets, traditions of past history and certain simple regulations for conduct and ritual; the prophets themselves, as the originators of a new conception of the will of Jahveh, based on morality; and after the prophets, a new and sombre ideal of cultus and worship, diversified by the piety of the Psalmists and the prudential maxims of what is known as the Wisdom Literature.

Having therefore cleared the ground, and, it may be, simplified our task, let us repeat our question — the question that really matters for us here. Is there anything that can be called characteristic of Old Testament religion? And if so, how did it develop? Here the prophets must naturally be our starting-point. Not that we would deny (as some appear to do) that any real religion existed before them; but because in them we have the writings of definite individuals as distinct from compendia or compilations of tradition, and because there is unmistakeably something in them which is definite and *sui generis*.

It is often said that the prophets (and more particularly the great prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries — Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah) were 'ethical monotheists'; here lies their claim to originality. Both these words, however, are vague and inadequate. Nor can we hope to sum the prophets in a phrase or a text. Yet there are three texts or oracles which take us to the heart of their message: *Am.* iii, 2, 'you only have I known . . . therefore will I punish you'; *Jer.* xxxi, 31, 'a new covenant'; and even more, *Mic.* vi, 8, 'to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.' Take Micah's words first. There are three terms here, justice, mercy, and humility before Jahveh. *Justice* means the conduct which puts or keeps a man right with his fellows, or his God; in which he answers every claim that may be rightly made on him, withholding from no man his due, and discharging every obligation recognized by his society. And when a man is 'put in the right' or 'justified,'

he is regarded as if all these claims had been met, whether they had actually been met or not. The conception is quite simple and plain, and only grows troublesome when the lawyers or philosophers or theologians get hold of it. The word translated *mercy* unfortunately hardly means what we mean by that beautiful word to-day. If we examine the passages in which it is used up and down the Old Testament books, we shall find that it refers to the kind of action required by a definite bond or relation in which two individuals or groups stand to one another; husband and wife, friend and friend, man and God. Sir G. Adam Smith, with the advantage of the Scottish language behind him, called it 'leal love.' It is based on loyalty to that bond, as Adam Smith felt; and when one member or partner is unfaithful to the bond, the other must do all he can, because of his very loyalty to the bond, to bring back the wrong-doer to the loyalty which he on his side has deserted. He will take the first step in reconciliation. This may look like mercy, or involve it; but it is more. It is a definite obligation to do all in your power to keep or to place another, however unthankful or resentful or hostile, where he ought to be. *Humility* to Jahveh means that Jahveh's will must be respected, that no consideration must be allowed to stand in conflict with it, and that Jahveh's claims, and the relation in which he chooses to stand with man, must never be set aside.

Now pass from this to Amos. Jahveh has chosen to enter into a special relation to Israel, one of confidence and intimacy (for that is what, to the Hebrew, is meant by 'knowing'); and therefore while the sins of others will certainly bring their disastrous consequences, Israel's disloyalty must always be peculiarly heinous. And what of Jeremiah? This bond or pact or covenant has hitherto been imperfectly understood. It has been looked on as external, like a legal or commercial agreement; Jeremiah might have been thinking of some of our systems of the Atonement. Now it is to be an affair of the disposition, the will, the whole attitude of the mind to life. It will be seated, inscribed, in the heart.

In these three outstanding passages, is there one central conception or word? Assuredly; for they are all held together by the conception of a *covenant*. Each one of Micah's three

terms implies this, and would be unintelligible without it; so does Amos' stress on knowledge. And yet the word covenant itself is misleading as a translation of the Hebrew (*B'rith*). To us it implies a convention, a formal procedure, or a legal instrument; an agreement voluntarily entered into, and hence enforceable by law. The Hebrew implies more than this. It has nothing essentially conventional or arbitrary in it; nor is it necessarily forensic and enforceable. It is rather an agreement between two *persons*. It exists, because the persons are what they are. Marriage may be a condition in which the State is interested. It is a ground for the 'restitution of conjugal rights.' But to the husband and wife it is something infinitely more. Indeed, when the State has to set itself to deal with marriage, the heart and soul of marriage have already disappeared. And when Jahveh enters into a covenant with Israel, it is because the relation therein embodied exists in his nature, and is meant to exist in theirs. He cannot break it. He must keep it for his name's sake. And if they break it, nothing is too terrible as a consequence, or too hard as a remedy. It will shape all their actions to their fellow-Israelites, members with them of the covenant; and it will shape all their relations to Jahveh himself. It lies at the centre, both of their calamities, when they have broken it, and of his deliverance, when he accomplishes their restoration.

Here we have what may be rightly called the characteristic of Israel's religion; first, because we find it nowhere else in the ancient world; we look in vain for it in Egypt or Babylon, in Greece, in India. We can find kindness, severity, providence, carelessness, power, condescension; but nowhere this personal relation, where each, God as well as man, has his duties and his claims. Secondly, because it is everywhere in the profounder utterances of the Old Testament. Not that it is everywhere explicitly stated; but whenever we look for the ground of what is expressed about the attitude of Jahveh to Israel, his jealousy or his loving kindness, and of what is demanded from Israel by Jahveh, their obedience or their trust, we find this and nothing else. It is the property of the Old Testament, the legacy of the Old Testament to the New.

What then of its evolution? It is in the prophets. Did it originate there? Did it spring up full-armed in their powerful

and acute minds, like another Athene from the head of Zeus? Clearly, no. It was never enunciated in earlier times with the prophetic explicitness. But the Hebrews knew that Jahveh had delivered them from Egypt, and had made them a nation by giving himself to them as their god. Other nations too had their own gods, who might be expected to protect them if they were sufficiently strong or well-disposed. But Jahveh, unlike them, demanded from his people rational conduct. The Israelite was not left, like perplexed sufferers in Babylon or Rome, to wonder what god or goddess he had offended; and the simple laws which moulded the conduct of Israelites to one another — adaptations, as they might seem to an external observer, of the more complex regulations of Babylon — were founded on the conviction that Jahveh's relation to Israel made all Israelites brothers. There could be no caste there; no distinction between gentleman and common fellow; the very laws were demands for going beyond the law and doing what no law in any other country had ever tried to enforce. When they made their way into Palestine — the land of promise, as they called it later — and were perched insecurely on the central ridge, while Philistine regiments and Canaanite war-chariots swept to and fro beneath them, they could never have maintained their position had not every conflict been a 'coming to the help of Jahveh against the mighty.'

True, they might be influenced by their surroundings in a hundred ways. They might pick up the folk-stories they heard round them in Egypt; they might learn the farmers' superstitions and cults along with the farmers' craft and experience in Canaan; they might repeat to one another the aetiological myths that Babylon had brought to Hittite and Amorite in Palestine before them. They might re-clothe their own traditions in the garb of the legends of the people of the land, as they might copy, in an unskilful and bungling way, the arts they found in the cities and villages they inhabited or destroyed. But all they borrowed and transplanted took a shape of its own, because the soil in which it was set had its own character and structure. They were the people of Jahveh, and nothing could efface from their consciousness their claims on him, his claims on them. It is even possible that both priest and prophet were the gifts, or the discoveries, of their entrance into Canaan. But

it was the shrine and altar of Jahveh which the priest tended, however hard it might be for a stranger to distinguish Jahveh's altar from that of a Baal; and it was the word of Jahveh that the prophet uttered, however similar his ecstatic caperings might appear to those of the dervishes of Carmel or Jericho. But why do we find no mention of a consort for Jahveh save at Elephantine?

Now, the prophets of the eighth century, despising the corybantic frenzies of their predecessors (if predecessors they really were; Amos doubted it) and schooled by the degeneracy of the times to see that Jahveh and the Baals must be for ever distinct, announced that Jahveh must be worshipped in spirit and truth; and they recalled Israel to the faith of her early days of the desert. It was no new word that they claimed to bring, but the word that had been known, though forgotten, from the beginning. And they were right. Whether the faith had been learnt from Moses, or preserved, as they came to think, in some simpler form from the dim ancestors of the race, it was this faith that made them and kept them a nation. In every generation it was in danger of being lost. It would have been lost, we may well surmise, if it had not been for some leader or judge, raised up, as they said, by Jahveh, like unto Moses, who recalled to them what had been forgotten but never quite lost. And when the great prophets, like normal men who could see among the blind, or like Plato's philosopher, who had been taken into the sunlight outside the cave, attained to real explicitness and spread out, evolved, the truth hitherto rolled up, the nation was ready to become more than a nation. The political scene changed; the kings were no more; and the nation, which otherwise would have perished with its kings, became a church.

Yet the faith was the same. All else changed. Jahveh's relation to Israel, Israel's relation to Jahveh, could not change. Israel still showed (for better or for worse) her remarkable powers of assimilation; her hospitality to the religious ideas around her. She borrowed recklessly, shamelessly, as before. Babylonian monsters, Persian angels, Oriental beliefs in another life, Egyptian pictures of future judgment or treatises of proverbial philosophy, Greek legends and rites, all could be woven into the web of her thought and practice; and when her

more daring minds thought about her place among the nations, they could use an old Levantine sailor's tale as easily as a picture of their own bygone village life. But it was their place among the nations over which they brooded; Jahveh's appointed destiny for them, that fired their hopes in the darkest hours. The most strenuous among them, indeed, abjured this hospitality, and took refuge in a separation that grew in each generation more austere. Because Jahveh had chosen them, he must reject all other nations, and punish all commerce with them. But even in those literary works where the nation figures least, and the futility and the burden of human life and suffering shriek against any creed, the thought of the Hebrew cannot shake itself free from its old faith. Ecclesiastes is anchored as firmly to Jahveh as the Psalmist; and the author of *Job* is as true to Jahveh, in his inmost heart, as Jeremiah.

Whence came this faith? At present, we cannot say. It is indeed hard to conceive the kind of knowledge that might lead to the discovery. We are no nearer to the answer when we learn that *Jau* was a frequent element in Babylonian proper names, or are bidden to find in Moses' stay with Jethro the formative period of his life. These things have no more to do with the faith of Israel than the Assyrian altar that Ahab brought home from Damascus. Somehow or other, a gift came to them that was bestowed on no other people under heaven. It was like the consciousness that a boy might have of the peculiar attitude of his father to him, the special nature of his father's affection and trust. Dimly understood at first, sometimes forgotten, sometimes doubted, it would still remain, the groundwork of his thoughts, the anchor of his plans. Independent of this, his life would have its own story, its own development. His changing habits, his expanding interests, his growing resources, his widening prospects, his clothes, his holidays, his investments, his successes and his disasters, all might form an evolution of their own. Yet by their side, beneath them, and affecting every one of them, would be the inner development, not to be measured by his outer history, yet with its own progress and fulfilment. The river may flow past many cities and countries of men; it bears upon its bosom their commerce; but it is still itself, until it enters the ocean. The true development is from within, not

from without; *in foro interno*; and therefore *sub specie eternitatis*.

> For soul is form, and doth the body make;
> And from the soul the body form doth take.

Yet there is more to say than this; and it can perhaps best be said by taking two illustrations; the one from a feature of the Old Testament literature that meets us everywhere, the other from what is unique there and unparalleled. Hitherto, we have hardly mentioned the Jewish sacrifices. To the majority of students of the Old Testament, sacrifices form the most characteristic element in the religion of Israel. Is this true? If so, what have they to do with the faith of Israel as we see it? The earlier prophets, as is well known, would have nothing to do with sacrifices. Jeremiah appears to have even turned against the centralized and presumably purified cultus of the Reformation of 621. True, Ezekiel (if Hölscher and Torrey will allow us to say so) sketched out an elaborate ritual; Haggai and Zechariah regarded the temple worship as central. Yet, after the exile, as before, the prophets were loud in their protests against the magic and superstition of the altar. On the other hand, sacrifice is universal in the pre-prophetic tradition, and the altar is at the heart of the post-prophetic law or *torah*. That the Hebrews did not learn of sacrifice from Moses is certain. It was all round them in the world they lived in. And sacrifice as such had nothing to do with Israel's faith or Jahveh's covenant. It might be a tribal performance, an individual bribe or a national thanksgiving or penance, or the pretext for an orgy of drunkenness and lust. Hence the neglect and hatred of it in the greater prophets. But it was there. It could not be expelled, though the ethnic cultus of the altar was an abiding danger. So it was adopted, converted. Even in the earlier days, the god who was approached at the altar was the Jahveh who had made himself known to his people as their deliverer. To the worshipper, after the exile, the sacrifices were the means whereby those who had been guilty of ritual shortcomings and misdemeanours could resume their contact and their covenant relations with Jahveh. But for deliberate and high-handed sins, no sacrifice would avail. Repentance alone could serve the need of the conscious

inner. Neither priest nor psalmist had any doubt on that point. The covenant was personal; the breach of it was personal too; nd only by personal dealing could it be renewed. The altar was hus a witness to its sanctity.

Let us now turn to the solitary and mysterious figure of the Suffering Servant. Here we seem outside the region of evolution altogether. For nothing like it has gone before or comes after. He is chosen and trained to give Jahveh's instruction to mankind. He grows dispirited, and is bidden to look beyond his own people to the nations of the world. He is humiliated, and must set his face against his detractors and persecutors like a flint. Finally, he is hounded to a miserable and loathsome death. Then the onlookers discover that it is their load, their sin, that he is bearing; that he is making intercession for them. In his death, he carries away their sin, and he makes them righteous, puts them in the right, as he had been himself all the time, with God. This is not the faith of Israel. It is not the Old Testament at all. It is the New. And yet because it is the New, it is at the centre of the revelation of the Old. There is nothing in it about sacrifice. But in rather startling language (if the text is right), the servant is twice said to be the covenant of the people. How can an individual be a covenant? Even Jesus did not call Himself the covenant, though He spoke of His blood as the blood of the new covenant. Yet Jahveh's covenant with his people was bound to lead to this. It had been broken; the people had repudiated it, and were scattered like wandering and lost sheep on the mountains. Sin, wilful alienation from God, had done its worst. If the covenant relation, the relation which was of the very being of God, was to be restored, Jahveh (as Israel had previously known) must take the first step. How was he to do this? Not simply by bidding them cease to do evil and learn to do well. Not by writing a new covenant on their heart. Not even by restoring them in love and mercy to their own land. Still less, by bidding them look to the waters of Egypt or the mountains of Persia for a deliverer. Restoration was to come through one who, appointed by Jahveh himself, should take on his shoulders the load of their sin, and by bearing it for them should bear it away for ever.

Evolution is but a cold word in the glow of such a vision as this. Yet this is where we see it at its fullest. The nature of everything is best seen in its maturest proportions. The faith that began with Deborah's song, and before, culminates in the Servant who came, despised and rejected, to the help of the Lord; and if Ezekiel saw that the leaves of the trees by the river that flowed from the throne of Jahveh were for healing, the author of the Servant Songs, like the seer of Patmos, knew that they were for the healing of the nations.

THE EVOLUTION OF JUDAISM IN THE POST-EXILIC PERIOD*

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ITS LITERATURE

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MUCH of the literature of the Bible comes within the period assigned to this paper, covering a large part of the Canonical Old Testament and many of the books of the Apocrypha, not to mention the extra-Biblical Apocalypses and Pseudepigrapha. What is here attempted is to note certain important landmarks indicating stages of development, some of which will seem to us progressive, some retrogressive, judged in the light of Christian thought.

The problem of dating our documents is not easy. In many cases there is only internal evidence available, and that often of a very meagre character. We can only weigh possibilities, and are then frequently compelled to make a leap in the dark. There is, however, this consolation, that much of the great literature of the Hebrew people is timeless. Its value does not depend on its date, or, for that matter, on its authorship. Disappointing though it is to the historian that we cannot date accurately such a book as *Job*, it makes no difference to the debt we owe to the Hebrew people for the contribution they have made to the religion of the world. And, while detailed accuracy appears to be unattainable, we can place most of our documents within limits which permit the general progress of the course of development to be traced.

The development of religious thought in any period depends on the development of the conception of God. The various branches of Hebrew religion, such as the Messianic hope, or the

* The period from the close of the Exile to the death of Herod the Great covers some five hundred years. First comes the Persian Period beginning with the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus in 538 B.C. and concluding with Alexander the Great's conquest of the East in 333 B.C. This ushers in the Greek Period, sub-divided into (1) the Ptolemaic Period to 201 B.C., (2) the Seleucid Period to 165 B.C. Next comes the Maccabean Period followed by the Herodian Age and Roman Supremacy.

emergence of belief in a full life after death, are closely linked with the contemporary history of the nation. But ultimately each of these branches grows out of the main stem — faith in God.

It is, then, with the development of the conception of God that we are mainly concerned. But subsidiary to this we must trace the growth of thought on the problem of suffering, the Messianic hope, and belief in life after death. And development, whether in nature or history, is rarely along a single line. It is wrong, for instance, to regard the history of this period simply as one of the growth of legalism. We must recognize parallel lines of development, sometimes mutually antagonistic, and yet growing side by side. Again, religious development sometimes takes the form of the emergence of new or fuller truth, while at other times there are periods of quiet assimilation. The post-exilic period comes at the end of a great creative epoch. It may well be said that in the writings of Deutero-Isaiah (the author of *Isaiah*, chs. xl-lv) the high-water mark of the work of the great Hebrew prophets is reached. All that remained was the need for the assimilation of their teaching, the full elucidation of its implications and its formulation into the language of devotion and worship, as in the Book of Psalms.

There is a note of finality in the Second Isaiah which is unmistakeable. This great prophet has a world-wide vision, based on uncompromising monotheism. There is for him one God alone, eternal and unchangeable, who rules the earth in righteousness. Jehovah is the Creator of heaven and earth, before whom the nations are as a drop in the bucket or as a speck of dust on the balance. The gods of the heathen are but wood and stone, the work of men's hands. God is the Holy One of Israel, the title so often used by Isaiah of Jerusalem, but His purposes are now seen to extend over all the nations. The whole preceding history of Israel, as well as its future, is seen in the light of an all-wise, saving purpose of Jehovah for the whole world. There is a note of exaltation and joy in Deutero-Isaiah, as of one who has reached an ultimate truth, and found in it rest for his soul. Here the barriers of national religion are burst, and the foundation is laid for an universal faith. If it is true that in Deutero-Isaiah Hebrew prophesy reaches its high-water mark, it is equally true to say that this great prophet attains his own highest

thought in the remarkable 'Suffering Servant' passages. These are best described as the Servant Songs. They are poetical, and can without violence to the thought be separated from the passages where they occur. It has been held that they may belong to a different time, and even perhaps to a different author. It may be that as poetical insertions in the Biblical narrative are often earlier than the prose narrative itself, the Servant Songs should be regarded as earlier compositions by the same author, taught to the people as songs, and afterwards embedded in his prophesies. We cannot tell. The teaching contained in these passages was a most necessary and valuable antidote to the normal Deuteronomic outlook of Hebrew faith that prosperity always follows right-doing, and that suffering is necessarily the lot of evil-doers.

The Servant Songs are four in number, *Isaiah* xlii, 1-7; xlix, 1-9; lx, 4-10; lii, 13—liii, 12. There are three distinct pictures given of the work of the Servant. In the first two Songs, the prophetic duties of the Servant are foremost. As in the case of a prophet, God has given the Servant His Spirit for the work. It is true he has laboured in vain and spent his strength for nought, yet he was formed from birth to be Jehovah's Servant, and to bring Jacob back to Him. Now, as though it were too little a thing to be Jehovah's Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel, he is to be given as a light to the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

The second picture, contained in the third Song, is that of the Servant as a trained disciple, listening to Jehovah's voice, and thus able to give to the weary a word of help, but suffering shame and ignominy for his faithfulness. The last picture describes more fully the sufferings, death and burial of the Servant, emphasizing their redemptive character, and their issue in ultimate triumph.

It is to be noted that all the Hebrew tenses imply that the sufferings of the Servant were completed when the prophet wrote. There can be no doubt that the Servant is Israel. 'And he said unto me, Thou art my servant; Israel in whom I will be glorified' (xlix, 3). But it is also said that it is the Servant's task to restore Israel to God, and that his sufferings were 'for the redemption of My people.' It therefore refers to some section

of Israel which had suffered for its faith. It has been suggested that the Servant is an abstraction, the ideal Israel, some day to be realized. But would the writer have used past tenses so uniformly in describing the Servant's sufferings, if he had in mind merely an ideal?

There seems to be a gradual narrowing of the conception. At first it may be the people as a whole personified. There is nothing in the first song to suggest any limitation. Then it becomes clearer that it is the faithful remnant who have suffered for their faith. But in the last two Songs, while making every allowance for the Hebrew love of personification, it is hard not to feel that the prophet had some individual martyr in mind whose sufferings were typical of those called for from the true Servant of Jehovah. It is by no means improbable that the thought of Jeremiah, martyred, according to tradition, by his own people in Egypt, was in the mind of the writer. But the thought of the suffering nation is never lost, and the prophet's immediate purpose is to call forth a similar fidelity, as had been shown by a faithful nucleus in the past, in all who would be true Servants of the Lord. And the truth that suffering has redemptive power, and that God makes perfect through suffering, was supremely fulfilled, in the true Hebrew sense of that word, in the Cross of Christ.

The teaching of this great prophet was not immediately assimilated, nor was his joyful note of certainty transmitted to his contemporaries, though it re-appears in certain Psalms which may well belong to this time. The economic stress of the early Persian Period no doubt bore heavily on the returning exiles. Disillusionment, coupled with some loss of faith, followed, and enthusiasm for the rebuilding of the Temple began to flag. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah sought to raise the people from their torpor and were successful in their immediate objective, the rebuilding of the Temple, which was completed in 516 B.C. But the teaching of these prophets represents a marked decline from that of Deutero-Isaiah. They present a call to duty and service, which falls far below the ringing evangel of the earlier prophet. The night visions of Zechariah are not, however, without their message of comfort. Not only is the Temple to be built, but, in words which echo the 'new Covenant' passage of

Jeremiah, God is to come and dwell in the midst of His people. 'Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people' (*Zech.* ii, 10, 11). Clearly the process of assimilation of the teaching of the earlier prophets was going forward.

There is also in Zechariah evidence of a growing sense of sin. In the fourth night-vision the clothing of the High Priest, Joshua, in clean garments, symbolizes the taking away of the nation's sin. The conception of ritual holiness probably enters into this vision. Yet by no means entirely. For in chapter 7 we are told that they of Bethel had sent a deputation to the prophet to enquire whether, now that the Temple was being rebuilt, it was necessary to observe the fast in memory of the destruction of Jerusalem. The Prophet asked whether their motive in keeping the fast was to please Jehovah or to please themselves. He then proceeds, in the spirit of the older prophets, to urge justice and mercy towards the widow, the fatherless and the stranger, for neglect of which, he says, the former destruction of the city had taken place. In the seventh vision, too, sin is depicted as a woman in an ephah, which is despatched to Babylon in the care of two women flying with the wings of a stork. It is impossible not to feel that moral, rather than ceremonial, failure is here implied. But there is not that sense of the need of the law written in the heart, which is contained in the 'New Covenant' passage of Jeremiah. This thought does re-appear however in Trito-Isaiah. 'As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever' (*Is.* lix, 21). The last chapters of *Isaiah* lvi-lxvi, called Trito-Isaiah, appear to be a series of messages delivered, not necessarily by the same prophet, from about 500-450 B.C. There is a strict regard for institutionalism, *e.g.* on the matter of the observance of the Sabbath, with an equal insistence that the spirit is more important than the letter. Thus the prophet, in a noble passage in chapter 58, gives us a lofty conception of the true fast. 'Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bonds of wicked-

ness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy healing shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward' (*Is.* lviii, 6-8). This writer occasionally uses phrases which suggest Deutero-Isaiah, but the thought is different. For instance, with regard to Israel's relations with the Gentiles, whereas Deutero-Isaiah thinks of Israel as a prophet nation called to witness to the Gentiles, Trito-Isaiah thinks rather of the nations as bringing tribute and gifts to the altar at Jerusalem. 'The abundance of the sea shall be turned unto thee, the wealth of the nations shall come unto thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; they all shall come from Sheba: they shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praises of the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory' (*Is.* lx, 5-7). The conception is far below that of Israel as a prophet nation, sharing its spiritual treasures with the other nations, and thus becoming a light to lighten the Gentiles, as visualized by Deutero-Isaiah.

One very fine conception in Trito-Isaiah is the creation of new heavens and a new earth. 'For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind,' a wonderful poetic passage implying that nature itself will be transformed in harmony with regenerate Israel. A fine picture of national prosperity follows, based on a surer foundation than many modern Utopias. 'They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands . . . And it shall come to pass that, before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall

not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord' (*Is.* lxv). Here we are back on the heights; to which this unknown prophet frequently rises.

There are few literary and historical problems so complicated as the relationship of the work of Ezra to that of Nehemiah. A superficial reading of the Biblical narrative would suggest that they were contemporaries. But many modern scholars date Ezra's mission to Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the Second, instead of Artaxerxes I. If this is so, Ezra followed Nehemiah after an interval of some forty years. He may have found Nehemiah's reforms had not been lasting, and by appealing to the Priestly Code, have found it possible to reintroduce them with a greater chance of success. On the traditional dating of Ezra, we are faced with the strange situation that two, who are represented as contemporaries, are both represented as carrying through similar reforms within a few years at most. It is true Ezra and Nehemiah are mentioned as contemporaries in *Neh.* viii, 9, in connection with the reading of the Law, but in the Apocryphal book I *Esdras* in the corresponding account the name of Nehemiah is omitted. It seems likely therefore that Ezra's visit to Jerusalem should be dated in the reign of Artexerxes the Second, that he followed Nehemiah and was able to carry through his work to success. Even so, we cannot regard the Ezra tradition as entirely trustworthy. There is a constant tendency in the Priestly writer from whom it comes to exalt the work of Ezra the Priest at the expense of that of Nehemiah the layman. The most we can say is that the Ezra tradition is typical of the movement which shaped Judaism in the succeeding centuries.

The age of Nehemiah marks the growth of separation and isolation. The failure to accept help from the Samaritans at the time of the rebuilding of the Temple had already alienated their sympathy, and they opposed the building of the walls. Nehemiah's policy of opposition to foreign marriages, which included the prohibition of inter-marriage with the Samaritans, widened the breach, and rendered the Samaritan schism inevitable. This policy marked a sad fall from the universalism of Deutero-Isaiah, and must be regarded as a decline from the truest line of development. It was the forerunner of Pharisaic

intolerance of later days. At the same time it is impossible to deny that some measure of religious isolation may have been necessary for the very survival of Judaism. The channel had to be narrow in order to give depth and direction to the stream. But for Nehemiah it is unlikely the spirit of the Maccabees would have arisen, and the Jewish faith might have been overwhelmed in the wave of Hellenism that came with the conquests of Alexander the Great. This truth need not blind us to the harm done by the growth of legalism and ritualism after the time of Nehemiah. For a time ritualism vied with legalism for the place of honour. Much of the Law was of course ceremonial; but the Ten Words at the heart of the Law were a standing testimony to the ethical side of Judaism. Ritualism and the sacrificial system remained; but the scribe became of more importance than the priest, and the Synagogue than the Temple, in their actual influence on religion and life. There was certainly a strong ethical element in the reforms of Nehemiah. The Sabbath was observed partly as a matter of ceremonial abstention from labour; but not entirely so. It was enjoined less that the Israelite should rest, than that he should give rest to others, particularly slaves, and therefore had a philanthropic motive, as well as the religious aim of enjoining leisure for worship. Nehemiah's attempt to put down usury by precept and example is further evidence of the ethical character of his reforms. It is quite in line with the prophetic injunction to do justly, to love mercy, and to care for the fatherless and the widow.

Malachi insists on the payment of tithes; probably the priests were in destitution through failure of the people to do so. He also puts a high moral ideal before the priests for whom the tithes are paid. Speaking of Levi, he says, 'My covenant with him was of life and peace . . . The Law of truth was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and uprightness, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts' (*Mal.* ii, 5-7). The priests are rebuked because they have not kept that standard of life.

The Priestly Code may have been completed in Babylon somewhere about 500 B.C. It is not unlikely that it was Ezra

who first made the people of Jerusalem familiar with this record of the past, and its ceremonial requirements. The purpose of the Priestly writers was to give an account of the origin of the rites and practices of religion. Thus the Sabbath is derived from God's rest after the work of Creation. The origin of circumcision is traced back to Abraham; that of the priesthood and the sacrificial system to the giving of the Law at Sinai. English readers can, with a little practice, recognize the Priestly Code, now embedded in the Pentateuch. It delights in numbers and measurements, and is written in stately, legalistic, style. Phrases like 'These are the generations of,' 'After its kind,' 'Male and female,' are characteristic of P.

To understand P's conception of God we must depend in the main on the first Creation story (Gen. i, ii 4*a*). There is very little else in the whole code to show us the theological ideas of the writers. God, in the first Creation story, is beyond the world, its transcendent Creator, a living and personal, but purely spiritual Being. Very different is the Jehovah of the earlier narrative, placed second in *Genesis*. Here we find a strong anthropomorphic conception of Jehovah, who walks in the garden in the cool of the day, and is spoken of in very human terms. Moreover, whereas in the J document Jehovah speaks to men through angels, and in E through dreams, P knows nothing of such intermediate means of communication. The stately hymn of Creation in seven days cannot, without violence to truth, be reconciled with modern scientific theory, but it has always given a picture of purposive, orderly creation, with man as its summit and goal. It is remarkable, too, that here, where the transcendence of the Creator is so clearly taught, man is yet declared to be 'made in the image of God,' a conception of the greatest importance to a true valuation of human nature and its possibilities. It will thus be seen that the priestly writers had assimilated much that was valuable from the prophetic tradition.

We cannot be blind, however, to the harm done to Hebrew religion by the Priestly Code. It gave permanent form to the identification of holiness with ritual cleanness, and thus tended to stress the ceremonial rather than the social law, and to place a heavy yoke on subsequent Jewish faith, under which even the early Christian Church was almost crushed. In regarding 'im-

pure' as synonymous with 'heathen,' it turned Israel away from its true call to be a prophet nation, and in its place gave a very different picture, which was only too readily accepted, of a redeemed Israel in the midst of a hostile, unclean world.

The love of the Law was, however, not entirely unworthy, and as expressed in the Psalms, *e.g.* 19 and 119, it rises to great heights. The Psalmists, true to the prophetic spirit, rise far above the love of ceremonial or ritual ordinances. The latter is found, but so also is the great prophetic teaching that to obey is better than to sacrifice. By obedience to the Law the Psalmist meant primarily the moral surrender of the will to God; certainly in Psalm 19 it is moral rather than ceremonial commandments that the Psalmist has in mind. 'Who can discern his errors? clear thou me from hidden faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be perfect, and I shall be clear from great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock, and my redeemer.' The moral and ethical standards of the early prophets, which were never lost, acted as a continual safeguard at a time when there was danger that undue stress might be placed on the ceremonial demands of the priests. And because obedience to the will of God involved moral surrender to His holy will, the love of the law became a source of spiritual guidance, a lantern to the feet and a light to the paths. It also became a source of delight, 'more to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb.' The Psalmist can even rejoice in suffering. 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted: that I might learn thy statutes.' That writer was not far from the Kingdom of God. No wonder that this devotion to the Law enabled Israel's sons to come victoriously through the Maccabean struggle.

It was not without a protest that the tendency towards exclusiveness was accepted. There are two books which stand out of the literature of the time in quietly urging the need for a wider outlook. The first of these is the *Book of Ruth*, that exquisite story of the time of the Judges. It stresses the Moabitish origin of Ruth, the ancestress of David. The book is an idyllic story of human kindness, not a didactic work; but it is impossible to

conceive of the author approving the vigorous measures adopted by Ezra and Nehemiah against foreign marriages and it certainly contains a protest against such tendencies.

The *Book of Jonah* stresses a similar lesson in a more emphatic way. It may be described as a fine missionary pamphlet. No book of the Bible has been so misunderstood. The story is woven around an historical character, Jonah ben Amittai, mentioned in II *Kings* xiv, 25, but it is not, of course, a historical work, and was not so intended by the writer. The episode of the 'great fish' is derived from popular mythology, which abounds in similar stories. Jonah represents Israel swallowed up in the Babylonian Captivity, and now cast forth in order to take its message of repentance and faith to the world. The metaphor was evidently a familiar one, as is shown by such a passage as *Jer.* li, 34. 'Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his maw with my delicates; he hath cast me out.' Jonah, for his disobedience to the command to preach to Nineveh, was swallowed up by the great fish, just as Israel for its disobedience went to captivity. Israel had been restored in order that it might take its message of God to the heathen world around. The book closes with a wonderful message of the compassion of God, which includes not only the men and women of Nineveh, but even their cattle. 'Should not I have pity on Nineveh, that great city; wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?' The Christian Apostle, centuries later, asks, 'Does God care for the oxen?' This noble writer of the old covenant has no doubt about the answer. His picture of the divine compassion yearning over heathen Nineveh is a very bright spot in the literature of the age, and shows that the universalism of the earlier prophets was not lost.

It may have been during the sufferings the nation experienced towards the close of the Persian Period that a great poet of consummate skill penned the *Book of Job*. He used an old prose story, which was already in existence, containing the series of tragedies which happened to Job. With this as his basis, he produced his great didactic poem. His object is to combat the

popular view, the corollary of Deuteronomic teaching, that suffering is necessarily the result of antecedent sin. Job, in the old prose story, suffers a series of disasters, and is finally smitten with an incurable disease. But he is not conscious of having committed any grievous sin. His friends urge him to acknowledge his sin and seek forgiveness, and meanwhile to bear his trials patiently. But he stoutly maintains his integrity. Job had no hope of a full life after death to help in the solution of the problem. His hope for the future was that of his age, a shadowy existence in Sheol, away from even the presence of God. Once Job approaches near to a belief in individual immortality. In ch. xix, 25, he declares that he knows God his redeemer, or vindicator, liveth, and that he, Job, will see God standing above his dead body to vindicate his integrity. The greatest calamity for Job is that he cannot find God or understand His meaning.

> O that I knew where I might find him,
> That I might come even unto his throne (xxiii, 3).

At last God answers out of the storm and rebukes Job for his presumption. He reminds him of his inability to comprehend even the ordinary happenings of nature. How can he presume to question God's ways? Job is humbled in penitence.

> I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear
> But now mine eye seeth thee,
> Wherefore I abhor myself,
> And repent in dust and ashes.

The Epilogue represents Jehovah as rebuking the friends 'who have not spoken of me the thing which is right, as my servant Job hath,' and then proceeds to tell of the restoration of Job's former prosperity, in a way that is very untrue to the experience of life. The author of the Servant Songs in Isaiah had reached a deeper truth, that suffering has a redemptive value, which this author had not realized. Job's greatness lay in its clear statement of the problem, and its bold challenge to current teaching; it did a real and permanent service in counselling trust where God's ways are dark, and in that trust pointing the way to inward peace.

The Greek and Maccabean Age.

By the year 332 B.C. Alexander the Great was master of Palestine and the Greek Period commenced. For the history of this period we have Josephus, but he needs to be read with care. He tends to repeat popular stories without testing their truth. For the Maccabean Period we also have I *Maccabees*, which is a valuable historical work of a trustworthy character.

Under the first three Ptolemies the Jews were contented and tolerably prosperous. In Egypt there had grown a strong Jewish colony which had freedom to practise its own worship. In the reign of Ptolemy II Philadalphus, the LXX translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek was made.

By 198 B.C. the Jews had passed under the control of the Seleucidae of Antioch. The influence of Hellenism at once began to increase. While Hellenism was culturally ahead of Judaism, its moral influence had a corrupting effect on the purer standards of the Jew. What was needed was a synthesis between the secular knowledge of the Greek and the higher religion and morality of the faith of Jehovah. This was not easy to reach, and there was a real danger of Judaism being crushed. But when Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.) tried to exterminate Judaism, he met with the stern resistance of the Maccabees. Under Judas, Jonathan and Simon they won first religious and then political freedom. What might have been lost to the world had Hellenism triumphed is realized when we turn to the greatest spiritual treasury of the Jewish race, the Book of Psalms. Here we find the faith of the great prophets not only accepted, but made the basis of the finest models of worship ever produced.

Naturally the conception of God in any Psalm differs according to the age of its composition and the experience of the writer. In many of the Psalms God is the great king over all the earth, and His transcendence is emphasized. In others He is primarily the refuge and help of His people. 'The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer. My God, my strong rock, in Him will I trust.' Monotheism is triumphant in the Psalms. In the rare places where demi-gods are mentioned, Jehovah is supreme above all. The only limitation of God's being is the thought of His dwelling-place, a constant safeguard

against pantheism. The God of the Psalmists is omnipotent in His creative power, and His direction of the course of the world. He is unchangeable. Though heaven and earth decay and be changed as a garment, He remains. His wisdom has been manifested above all in creation. 'O Lord how manifold are thy works, in wisdom has thou made them all.' His omnipresence, described in Psalm 139, is not so much omnipresence of being, which is pantheism, as of knowledge and power. At the same time the Psalmists dwell again and again on God's loving care and compassion, His goodness, long-suffering and truth; though the New Testament word 'Father' is only rarely used, and then of Jehovah as the Father of His own people Israel. The covenant by which God has chosen Israel to be His people is constantly stressed, and it is a covenant which is to last for ever. The Psalmists delight in the Temple worship. This is a note which is especially prominent in the pilgrim psalms, sung by those who journeyed to the feasts at Jerusalem. But it is the joy of the presence of Jehovah for which the pilgrim longs. The importance of sacrifice is stressed in a few Psalms, but repudiated by others in uncompromising terms. Confession of sin is of the essence of true religion, and finds a real place in the Psalter. Psalm 51 is, of course, the most notable example. Even unconscious sin is recognized. Man's need of a new heart and a new spirit is acknowledged, and the certainty of God's forgiveness, where the sinner turns to Him in penitence and faith. The lapses of the Psalmists into self-righteousness are less frequent than their expressions of sinfulness. There is an all-pervading spirit of prayer, which reaches great heights of personal communion. It may be said that the greatest contribution of the Psalmists to the theology of the Hebrew race was their sense of the nearness of God, and His interest in His creation.

> The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon Him, yea unto all that call upon Him in truth.
> He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him.
> He will also hear their cry, and will save them.

The greatest blot on the Psalms from the Christian point of view is the imprecatory passages, with their longing for revenge on the enemies of God's people. We have to recognize that these can only be excused by the spirit of the age which produced them.

There are other passages, such as those which declare that death ends all, that are certainly unfit to be used in Christian worship. It is quite intolerable to sing in a Christian church such words as 'In death there is no remembrance of Thee, and who shall give Thee thanks in the pit' (*Ps.* vi, 5). Yet, with careful use, the Psalms are as fine a medium of worship as any nation has yet produced. Even the hymnody of the Wesleys cannot rival the best of them as models of heartfelt adoration of God.

The Wisdom Literature must have met a real need of the ordinary man, who could not easily assimilate the loftier conceptions of the prophets. It deals firstly with the divine Wisdom personified, and then, as a corollary, with the practical wisdom necessary for daily life. Of the Wisdom books, Proverbs, like the Law, was of gradual growth. The book may have assumed its present form about the middle of the Greek period. It was natural to attach the name of Solomon to these books, which are all of late origin.

Koheleth or Ecclesiastes has a character of its own. There seems to be a reference in it to Ptolemy Epiphanes (iv, 14), and we may date it just before 200 B.C. It is evidently the work of a recluse who felt deeply the vanity of life. The book is of historical value as revealing the doubts and questionings which must have been fairly widespread as Greek speculation permeated the more thoughtful elements of the population. His normally pessimistic temperament is at times enlightened by the Preacher's faith in God, which he feels ought to, but does not, solve his questioning.

Slightly later is the important work of Ben Sira, author of Ecclesiasticus, who also wrote about the year 200 B.C., and who gives us a vivid picture of the domestic and social life of the period. Much of his moral code, as is the case with all the Wisdom authors, is based on an enlightened expediency, but his standards are not ignoble for the age. The Wisdom literature is the work of poets and ethical teachers rather than philosophers. and they have only the simplest philosophy of life.

A very attractive book is the Apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon, which may be dated somewhere between 100 and 50 B.C. Like most of the Wisdom literature it is of Alexandrian origin, and aims at building a bridge between Hebrew theology and

Greek speculation. As we shall see, it is especially important in its approach to the doctrine of a future life. Its praise of Wisdom surpasses that of any other author.

> For she is the breath of the power of God,
> And a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty.
> Therefore can no defiled thing find entrance into her,
> For she is a reflection of everlasting light
> And a spotless mirror of the working of God
> And an image of His goodness.
> And though she is but one, she has power to do all things.
> And, remaining the same, maketh all things new.
> And from generation to generation entering into holy souls
> She makes them friends of God and prophets.

How such a writer would have welcomed the best knowledge of our age and sought to link it with the Christian faith!

By the second century B.C. prophesy had ceased. The Law had been exalted into an infallible guide, and the acceptance of any infallible authority tends to stagnation. But divine inspiration had not forsaken the Jewish race. Their religious genius was too deep for that. So the Apocalyptic literature arose. This literature is pseudonymous, bearing the name of some hero of old. Strange as this device is to us, it was not intended to deceive the reader. It was felt to be presumption to publish works in the author's own name, as though claiming original inspiration, and hence they were issued in the name of some well-known character of old, such as Daniel or Enoch. Daniel was compiled fairly early in the Maccabean struggle, but there are stories in it which are far earlier. Dr. Charles also places in pre-Christian times the Ethiopic Book of Enoch, the Book of Jubilees (40-10 B.C.), the original version of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, and the Psalms of Solomon. Apocalyptic literature attempted to vindicate God's righteousness in the face of the sufferings of His servants on earth. In order to do this it gave what Dr. Charles described as a Semitic philosophy of life. It dealt with the Creation, the origin of evil, and an unfolding of the secrets of the future. This included a picture of the Last Judgment and the coming of the Messianic kingdom, when the inequalities of life, both for the nation and the individual, would be reversed. The righteous dead were to rise and to share in the Kingdom.

Theology has suffered much from literalistic interpretation on the part of those who have failed to capture the mentality of

the writers of this literature. It is the general ideas which the seers intended to convey to the reader that matter, and there is no form of writing in which it is more necessary that attention be paid to the spirit and not to the letter. These books were widely read, as witness the translation of the books of Enoch into Ethiopic and Slavonic. The common people may have taken them with a bald literalism. But to the educated Jew Apocalypic was simply a technique for conveying religious truth. The matter is of great importance in the interpretation of the New Testament. We must not take pictorial expressions, such as the 'coming of the Son of Man in the clouds,' with a bald Western literalism, for the writers themselves did not so intend it.

The doctrine of the resurrection first clearly appears in the Book of Daniel. Ben Sira knew of no reward save the remembrance of a man's good name by posterity. But in the face of the sufferings of the Maccabean Age, faith in the life hereafter was finally achieved. It was still bound up with belief in a resurrection of the material body, but at last, as Prof. Kent says, 'the imperishable worth of the individual had become one of the corner-stones of Israel's religion.' In the Similitudes of Enoch the righteous who share in the glory of the Messiah are to possess bodies which are real, though transfigured by the radiance of their surroundings. This was the dominant belief of the Apocalyptic writers, that the righteous at the Resurrection receive back their bodies, but transfigured and glorified. 'They shall be clothed with garments of glory,' we read in I *Enoch* lxii, 15, 'and these shall be the garments of life from the Lord of Spirits.' This contained a permanent truth which passed over into the conception of the spiritual body in St. Paul.

Quite a different approach to the doctrine of a future life came from Alexandrine Judaism. The Wisdom of Solomon has already been mentioned in connection with the Wisdom literature. At Alexandria Judaism was faced with Greek speculation on the immortality of the soul. In the 'Wisdom of Solomon' we get the life beyond definitely taught as the immortality of the soul.

> God created man for incorruption
> And made him an image of his own being;
> But by the envy of the devil death entered into the world,
> And they that are of his portion make trial thereof.

> But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God
> And no torment shall touch them.
> In the eyes of the foolish they seem to have died;
> And their departure was accounted to be their hurt,
> And their journeying away from us to be their ruin:
> But they are in peace.
> For, even if in the sight of men they be punished,
> Their hope is full of immortality;
> And having borne a little chastening, they shall receive great good;
> Because God made trial of them and found them worthy of Himself.
>
> *Wisd.* ii, 23, to iii, 5.

There was thus no fixed dogma as to the nature of the future life. While the conservative Sadducees rejected the belief, the nation as a whole accepted it, not as part of a reasoned philosophy, but as a corollary of its faith in God and of the growing sense of the value of the individual.

As there were several distinct types of thought as to the hereafter, so there were different lines of development of the Messianic hope. The main line comes from the expectation of the great prophets that the glories of the Davidic reign would be restored. This naturally led to the hope of a King who would rule, not in the spirit of an Oriental tyrant, as too many of the Kings of Israel and Judah had ruled, but in righteousness and judgment. From this hope of a Davidic King came the main stream of Messianic expectations. It was nationalistic, and in itself worldly, involving the overthrow of their enemies and the establishment of a long period of worldly prosperity. But the Davidic King is to rule in righteousness and to bring peace to the whole world.

Throughout the Persian and Greek Periods this hope rarely, if ever, reappears. During such troublous times it must have seemed incapable of fulfilment. The victories of the Maccabees, however, revived the nationalist spirit, and raised the old hopes anew. In the late passage in *Zech.* ix, 9. 10, we have a picture of a King, lowly and yet victorious, riding on an ass, and bringing peace to the nations under his rule.

As the glories of the Maccabean age waned and the power of Rome became firmly established over the land, the hope grew. The author of the Psalms of Solomon, writing soon after Pompey's entry into Jerusalem, prays, 'Behold, O Lord, and raise up to them their King, the Son of David, in the time which thou,

God, knowest, that he may reign over Israel thy servant; and rd him with strength that he may break in pieces those who le unjustly' (*Ps. Sol.* xvii, 23).

In this book there is a strong ethical side to the Messianic pe. Messiah is to be pure from sin, and will not suffer iniquity lodge in their midst. 'And he shall not faint all his days, beuse he leaneth upon his God; for God shall cause him to be ighty through the spirit of holiness, and wise through the coun-l of understanding, with might and righteousness. And the essing of the Lord is with him in might, and his hope in the ord shall not faint. And who can stand up against him? He mighty in his works and strong in the fear of God, tending e flock of the Lord with faith and righteousness. And he shall low none of them to faint in their pasture. In holiness shall he ad them all, and there shall be no pride among them that any ould be oppressed' (*Ps. Sol.* xvii, 42-46).

The Similitudes of Enoch give another type of Messianic pe, that of the heavenly Son of Man, based no doubt on the ell-known passage in *Daniel* vii, and developed on the backround of current Apocalyptic thought. Here Messiah is preistent and has divine authority. When he comes the dead are rise, and he is to judge both angels and men. This type of Messianic hope was widely held in New Testament times. Beind it lay the conception that God Himself was about to estabsh His kingdom of righteousness, and that the agent of His urposes must possess divine authority and power.

In these later centuries Jewish thought remained true to the nity and spirituality of God, but there grew up a tendency to move God more and more from His world. He who had poken through the prophets was now so removed from His eople that intermediaries in the person of angelic beings had be introduced. This tendency can be traced back to earlier mes. It is present in Zechariah, and we read of 'the angel of His presence' in Trito-Isaiah. But it becomes quite normal in Daniel, where Gabriel and Michael are both mentioned by name. The same tendency is illustrated by reluctance to pronounce the acred name Jahveh, and in I *Maccabees* even the word 'God' s replaced by 'Heaven.' The one exception to this is in the ater Psalms. Here there is little of the undue fear of anthro-

pomorphism. It was the Psalmists above all who kept alive the sense of the nearness of God and His interest in, and love for, His people. The reason, no doubt, is that the Psalms represent the religion of the heart, and this imperiously demands a God who hears and who cares. But apart from the Psalmists the note of direct inspiration was increasingly superseded by minute observance of the regulations of the Law, and the personal relationship of man with God was hindered by removing Jehovah from direct contact with His world.

Great as had been the gift of Judaism to its own people, it needed a 'fulfilment' of all that had eternal validity in the beliefs and hopes of the past, and a purging away of much that was hindering true progress. In the 'fulness of time' this came. The true fulfilment of Israel's destiny was revealed. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. 'As Jesus Christ is the crown, so also He is the criterion of all revelation.'[1]

[1] These words come from the third resolution of the Lambeth Conference of 1930.

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE MODERN MAN

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IN this paper I desire to discuss the religious value of the Old Testament when the collection of books comprised within it is regarded in the light of modern knowledge. These books, with or without the Apocrypha, in the time of Christ formed the Jewish Scriptures. They represent the finest writings — all of them religious in character — produced by an exceptionally gifted race during well-nigh a thousand years of its history. They were chosen by a natural process of selection. In each there was something which made so powerful an appeal that ultimately it was regarded as in some sense inspired. The writers, like all the best representatives of the race to which they belonged, were profoundly religious in their outlook. In fact, the Old Testament is misunderstood unless it is read with the object of realizing the causes and character of the *religious* changes and developments which it describes. To the antiquarian, the anthropologist or the student of the early history of the Near East, the Old Testament is a quarry from which valuable material can be obtained. But such uses of the Old Testament are of secondary importance. The Jewish Scriptures are of peculiar value — they are, in fact, unsurpassed among the great religious writings of mankind — because they reveal the growth of religious intuition of the finest quality. By reason of the highly composite nature of the Old Testament there are to be found within it, and sometimes even within its separate books, astonishingly different levels of religious thought and aspiration. The modern approach to the Old Testament enables us to see that we should expect such differences and leads us to pick out the passages where the highest levels are reached. From these passages we can get an understanding of that view of the world — alike a religion and a philosophy — which we term ethical monotheism. This view of the world was the basis of the thought of Jesus. In

fact, we may not unfairly describe His religious thought as a synthesis of the finest kinds of religious understanding found in the Old Testament. We are attracted to His faith because of the unity between it and His life with its beauty and noble sincerity. But to realize how lesser men were led towards such a faith by the happiness and misery, the triumphs and disasters of their lives, is to be persuaded more surely of the truth of Christ's teaching. The New Testament contains that teaching as it was filtered through the minds of men in whose environment crude religious fancies and superstitions prevailed. Ignorance of natural law, a mental atmosphere infected on the one hand by the apocalyptic fancies of Judaic nationalism, and on the other hand by the redemptive theories of the mystery religions—such created the medium through which we have received the teaching of Christ. As we read the history of Christianity we see throughout it how the distorting medium has harmed the faith of Christ. There is no sovereign way of preserving a religion from degeneration. But we can keep our own religion nearer to the teaching of its Founder if we constantly emphasize that in Him Hebrew prophecy reached its culmination, and if from continuous study of the Old Testament we preserve a clear understanding of the religious beliefs of which that prophecy is the expression.

At the present time there exists a widespread tendency to ignore or to belittle or even to repudiate the Old Testament. Various causes for this tendency can be specified. In the first place, the primitive passions let loose during the Great War found some support in certain Old Testament narratives, though such narratives were, in fact, no more typical of the teaching of the great Hebrew prophets than extravagant war-time sermons were of the teaching of Christ. There has of late grown up an understanding that the feverish animosities engendered by war are not admirable: as a natural consequence those whose remembrance of the Old Testament is associated with stories like Saul's slaughter of the Amalekites[1] feel little attraction towards the Jewish Scriptures. In the second place, even in conservative religious circles, while the substantial inerrancy of the New Testament is stoutly held, it is tacitly allowed that the Old

[1] I *Samuel*, xv.

Testament is not free from error. The first chapter of *Genesis* obviously cannot be harmonized with the scientific conclusions which naturally all English children now learn as a part of their education. In fact, our modern outlook has created a background of thought against which we cannot maintain the traditional belief in the infallibility of Scripture. Preachers and teachers ought to set before those who listen to them a true view alike of the nature of inspiration and of the way in which throughout the earlier books of the Old Testament progress in religious development can be traced. Too often they find it more convenient to ignore the Old Testament. There is a third and shameful reason why the Old Testament is disregarded. At the present time anti-Semitism is, unfortunately, widespread. In Britain and America it has not gone to such absurd lengths as among the German-speaking peoples of Central Europe. But if you hate the Jews you naturally disparage their greatest contribution to human civilization. Finally, as we enumerate reasons why the Jewish Scriptures are avoided, we must take account of the age-long antipathy between Catholic and Jew. Christianity emerged from Judaism : to the historian of religions Christianity resembles Mohammedanism in that it is an offshoot of the faith which the great Hebrew prophets gave to mankind. One would have expected that the regard of the early Christians for the synagogue would have endured, and that between the Christian and Jewish Churches there would have been latent sympathy. We know that, in fact, though the Reformed Churches have shown little religious bitterness towards the Jew, the persecutions of medieval Catholicism continued sporadically until quite recent times. The reason for this unexpected fact is, of course, that Catholicism has resulted from the infiltration into the religion which Jesus taught of a stream of beliefs and ritual cognate to the mystery religions of Hellenized paganism. As this stream became stronger, the antipathy of Catholic towards Jew grew in intensity. I personally accept the contention that in the New Testament there can be found the germs of ideas alien from Christ's thought and yet prominent in modern Catholicism. Accepting this fact, we ought to emphasize that, just as the Christian may rightly contend that the Old Testament must be interpreted by the New, so also the New Testament must be

examined in the light of the Old if the Christian faith is to be preserved from developments of belief and of worship which Jesus would have condemned.

From the low esteem into which the Old Testament has fallen, Modernists must rescue it as a part of their professed object of exhibiting the Christian faith in its uncontaminated beauty and power. We are probably all of us so familiar with the main conclusions reached by critical scholars with regard to the Old Testament that we instinctively recognize the greatness of the Jewish prophets who were the forerunners of Christ and admire whole-heartedly the magnificent contribution to religious progress of which the Jewish Scriptures are the record. But our knowledge and regard are not widely shared, and, unless we can spread both, the religious revival for which we look will tarry.

Let me state a few facts, commonplace to ourselves, yet unknown to a surprising number of our fellow Christians. The Old Testament is built upon—or, if you prefer so to say, is centred upon—the teaching of the eighth century prophets. Even history which is earlier than the eighth century has been rewritten in accordance with later religious beliefs: we have, in fact, didactic history. Fragmentary passages which survive with little alteration from earlier times can be discovered. But, speaking generally, the adjustment to later ideas is thorough. In the books of *Samuel* and *Kings* we get such an adjustment: in the parallel books of *Chronicles* it is intensified. The Chronicler gives us didactic history doubly distilled by a religious fervour which is at times more enthusiastic than wise. We can hardly emphasize too firmly that the ethical monotheism reached by or through Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah is central in the collection of writings which we know as the Jewish Scriptures. The belief that there is one God, Lord of the whole earth, and that He is righteous—this belief dominates the Old Testament. It was not, of course, an original belief of the Hebrews. The tribes from which they sprang doubtless went through stages of primitive religion that seem to have been phases of human development the world over. In the Old Testament there survive traces of human sacrifice, of totemism, of polytheism. Beliefs in sacred trees and pillars, dwellings of spirits or gods, in ancestor worship, in fecundity cults with degrading sexual rites—all are hinted at

the records we now have. The religion of the earliest Hebrews ems to have been no better—perhaps no worse—than that of ner peoples in similar stages of emergence from barbarism. efinite progress, so far as we can trace it, began with Moses, a ebrew with an Egyptian name and some Egyptian culture. ossibly from a half-obliterated tradition of religious reform ing back to Akenaten, Moses gave to the tribes whom he led e belief that Jehovah, the Lord their God, was one God. her nations had other gods whose existence was apparently t doubted either by Moses or by the people whose leader he s. But Jehovah was gracious unto His people, giving them tory over their enemies, revealing His presence and power in ature. With such teaching was associated as time went on an nborate system of sacrificial worship, the wholesale slaughter animals, especially in the central Temple at Jerusalem. But avid and Solomon had passed away and the kingdoms of rael and Judah were separated before the greatest of the ebrew prophets arose. In the eighth and seventh centuries we t these men. Amos,[2] speaking in Jehovah's name, refuses crificial offerings: 'Let judgement roll down as waters, and hteousness as a mighty stream.' Hosea[3] modifies the message d carries it to a higher plane: 'I desire mercy, and not sacri- e; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.' cah[4] forcibly reiterates the same message: 'Will the Lord be eased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, at is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do tly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'

There is a splendid audacity in such repudiation of the whole paratus of the institutional religion of the time. And personal igion, the communion of the individual with God, begins to pear with the first Isaiah.[5] 'Mine eyes have seen the King, Lord of hosts.' 'And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, om shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here I; send me.' Such personal religion is seen more clearly in

[2] *Amos* v, 24.
[3] *Hosea* vi, 6.
[4] *Micah* vi, 7 and 8.
[5] *Isaiah* vi, 5 and 8.

the early decades of the sixth century with Jeremiah[6]: 'I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. . . . I will put my law in their inward parts and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God and they shall be my people . . . They shall all know me, from the least unto the greatest.' Ezekiel,[7] shortly afterwards, emphasizes the responsibility of the individual to God. 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son.' Gradually as the religious progress indicated by the passages which I have quoted was achieved, there came almost inevitably an understanding that Jehovah was Lord of the whole earth. Ezekiel,[8] speaking of Israel, could say in the name of Jehovah, 'Behold, all souls are mine.' But within the same century the second Isaiah[9] gave the larger message: 'I am God and there is none else: I am God and there is none like me.' 'My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country.' Jehovah should cause a non-Israelite, Cyrus the Persian, to restore the Jewish exiles to Zion once again.

Together with such religious teaching there grew up in Isaiah and Jeremiah political ideals which, though they are implicit in the Gospel of Christ, no Christian nation has yet put into practice. The first chapter of their teaching, as Nairne[10] has well said, was: 'Be honest in politics: restore justice at home: then trust in the Lord, who will certainly keep His people safe.' When, with intrigue in politics and injustice in social life, national ruin was plainly imminent, there came the second chapter: 'Prosperity, even safety, is a little matter compared with holiness and the peace of God's favour; trust the Lord even at the eleventh hour; put all in His hands, but do His will, do simply right; He may cause us to stand or He may cause us to fall before our enemies; let Him do as He judges best; be sure that what He does will be best for us.' I have quoted these words

[6] *Jeremiah* xxxi, 31 and 33, 34.
[7] *Ezekiel* xviii, 20.
[8] *Ezekiel* xviii, 4.
[9] *Isaiah* xlvi, 9, 10, 11.
[10] A. Nairne, *The Faith of the Old Testament*, 1914, pp. 70, 71.

-a summary of one aspect of prophetic teaching — because ey were written shortly before the outbreak of the Great War. would add that they seem to me to express precisely what ought be the attitude of Christ's followers when once again the ations are beginning to pile up armaments in fear of one nother.

Thus not only as regards personal religion but also in the omain of national and international politics we can learn much rom the Jewish prophets. It is true that with many of them the olden Age of Peace was associated with dream's of Israel's lory. But that glory becomes spiritualized in the most signifiant prophecies; and in the second Isaiah[11] what is left of Israel the suffering servant of the Lord, 'by whose stripes we are ealed.' If in the prophets personal religion does not reach the oftiest heights, political religion is seen at its finest. The polical thought of the people as a whole, it is hardly necessary to ay, never attained such grandeur. Too often the accredited eachers of Judaea manifested that bitterness towards national nemies which found supreme expression in the 137th Psalm: 'By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept.' In fact, as rophetic inspiration died down after the return from the exile, hard and exclusive nationalism grew up. But such a spirit was ot universal and there still survives a sublime protest against . In the book of *Jonah* we have an allegory which has well been alled the Holy of Holies of the Old Testament. In that book the teaching that towards all nations and peoples God is racious, full of compassion, slow to anger and plenteous in ercy.[12] We are all His children.

One other feature of Jewish thought, as it was moulded by ie great Hebrew prophets, demands our attention. It is the elief that God is Lord of Nature. He not only manifests His resence and power to mankind, guiding and controlling national nd social issues, but all Nature is subject to His will. We see is thought repeatedly in the Psalms, whose writers of course ad taken it from the great prophets. The winds are God's ngels, His ministers the flaming fire. 'Let everything that hath reath, praise the Lord.' 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works,

[11] *Isaiah* liii, 5. [12] *Jonah* iv, 2.

in wisdom hast thou made them all.' Such verses show how completely God is thought of as Lord of Nature. Even when faced by the problem of evil, the psalmists whom the prophets had taught would accept no division of God's realm. 'The young lions roar after their prey and seek their meat from God.'[13] And the second Isaiah[14] boldly says of God: 'I form the light and create the darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I am the Lord, that doeth all these things.' You may well enquire how such a teacher regarded God's connection with the evil of the world. The answer, such as it is, would seem to be found a few verses later: 'Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.' We are reminded of lines in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*:[15]

> 'And out of darkness came the hands
> That reach thro' nature, moulding men.'

Alike the Victorian poet and the prophet of the Exile find in man's ignorance a refuge for perplexity.

Ethical monotheism would be an easy faith were it not for the evil in the world. Naturally, after the return from the Exile, Jewish thinkers pondered upon many aspects of this intractable problem. Relatively early was that dramatic analysis of the relation of suffering to sin which forms the book of *Job*. This great work does not, of course, profess to be history. It is a philosophic drama, a composite work, possibly, in the form in which we now have it. At the end, after much talk, God out of the whirlwind bids Job contemplate His power manifest in creation. Reduced to intellectual despair, Job[16] can only say: 'I have uttered that which I understood not. . . . Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.'

After the phase of uneasy belief and anxious enquiry which we find in *Job* there grew up gradually, *pari passu* with a hard nationalism, a type of morality in which shrewdness tinged with cynicism was the prevailing note. In *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiastes* we see this type of teaching: and at times we wonder why such works were admitted to the Old Testament. Yet a sound instinct allowed them their place. We need books for all our moods;

[13] *Ps.* civ, 21.
[14] *Isaiah* xlv, 7.
[15] *In Memoriam*, cxxiii: in some editions cxxiv.
[16] *Job* xlii, 3 and 6.

nd, if we are to hold firmly to a belief in the power and good-ess of God, we must not forget — think of Tennyson's 'Power n darkness whom we guess'—the vain struggles of those whose ith has grown dim as they have sought to overcome the limita-ons which circumscribe us all.

Latest of all writings of the Old Testament is the book of *aniel*, an early example of a strange type of fiction which bears e technical name of 'apocalyptic.' Works of this character give ncouragement through imaginative history which purports to isclose the future. To the writers the dawn of a new age was hand. Distress and tribulation should be brought to an end: new order should appear. Against a background of apoca-ptic hope and expectation we must set the message of John the aptist. Some of the Gospel narratives and certain parts of the aching of Jesus would alike have assumed a different form but or the immense popular influence of apocalyptic thought-forms uring the two centuries before Jesus began to preach. Whether esus was sufficiently child of His age to share the apocalyptic eliefs of His era is, as we all know, disputed. He certainly sed the language of such beliefs. To us they can at best be gurative, emblems of possibilities in the life beyond the grave. Modern science has disclosed a past existence of the earth with duration of some thousands of millions of years. Life upon e earth will, so far as we can see, endure for hundreds of illions of years; and during that long time the developments the future will not differ in their fundamental character from ose of the past.

A hostile critic, as we have admitted, can point to elements the Old Testament which no reasonable man would defend. ow could it be otherwise with the literature of an ancient people urnered through a thousand years? Hence, as we warmly praise e Old Testament, we do well to say definitely that savage ven-ance never merited divine approbation. The story of Deborah id Jael is of value in that it shows how unpromising was the soil om which the fine flower of Hebrew prophecy sprang. Further, e can repudiate, even while we acknowledge a certain sympathy th, the weary cynicism of Ecclesiastes. We can, moreover, low that the naïve speculations with which the book of *enesis* opens and the strange expectations of the book of

Daniel mean little to men who view the past and the future of the earth in the light of the teaching of modern science. Admit all these facts, and none the less you must allow that in the Old Testament there is to be found spiritual understanding of supreme quality. In truth, the religion of the Old Testament at its best was extraordinarily fine, far finer than that which has often passed as Christian. To those who accepted this lofty religious teaching the world, in spite of the evil within it, was good, not bad. God, plenteous in mercy, pity and love, had created earth and man upon it. He governed it. All was subject to His will. There was no natural realm, where evil was well-nigh triumphant, as opposed to a supernatural realm where signs of God's rule could be plainly seen. The whole world was God's; and His servants could rightly enjoy its pleasures in thankful obedience to His law. Men were to find joy in God's service, to discover His loving power alike in Nature and in the over-ruling providence which shaped their lives. God, moreover, helped man to be good. There was in God's service no need of celibacy or any other form of asceticism. To repent of evil and to turn from sin was to find righteousness. Man's repentance led to God's forgiveness. Just as in his home the child, rightly taught, increased in goodness and in the knowledge of God, so the world was God's dwelling in which the man who sought to obey the Law learned the power and goodness of the Eternal.

Such at its best is the faith which emerges from the Old Testament. It is the faith in which Jesus was nourished. It is, very largely, the religion which He taught.

We may usefully enquire how far this faith differed, on the one hand, from the teaching and practice of contemporary Judaism, and, on the other hand, from the Christianity preached by St. Paul.

Christians have not seldom been unfair to Rabbinic Judaism as it existed at the time of Christ. They have, often unconsciously, exaggerated its weaknesses and defects that they might emphasize by contrast the superiority of the Gospel message. Let us try to be fair-minded. Not all Sadducees were worldly, wealthy and cynical: not all Pharisees were hypocrites: not all Scribes were pedants destitute of religious fervour. In every class were honest men, seeking to serve God: infirm of purpose,

may be, as we all are, yet undoubtedly genuine in belief and practice. But, none the less, we may fairly say that the Jew of the time of Christ had so often felt the bitterness of political subjection that a fierce nationalism had become part of his being, and his religion was the poorer for its dominance. Jesus —there are in the Gospels hints which may indicate that the progress was gradual—left Judaic nationalism out of His vision of the Kingdom of God; and we shall not be unjust if we claim that the teaching of Jesus was superior to that of the Rabbis of His time in that His religious message was free from national prejudices. Again, we may fairly say that there is little doubt that the protests of Jesus against insincerity and unreality in the religious life of His contemporaries were needed. But, we may ask, when have such protests not been needed in the Christian Church? The sincerity of Jesus was personal, one of many signs of the purity of the fire that burned within Him. In His excellent greatness we have a witness to the Christian claim that He was the Son of God. In the third place, we may rightly contend that the faith which issued from the Old Testament had one weakness which to the modern Englishman is surprising and tiresome. I will quote from a distinguished Jew, lest I show a bias that I would avoid. The intellectual side of Rabbinic Judaism, says Montefiore,[17] did not display itself in systematic theology and metaphysics. 'It was chiefly manifested in the study of the Law, where it spent itself in subtle and arid discussions, in elaborate legal minutiae, and in endless casuistical distinctions and hair-splittings.'

To Modernists I need hardly insist on the importance of the intellectual side of religion. Without the severe discipline of reason the decline of faith through luxuriant emotion to superstition is certain. In view of the magnificent contributions to philosophy made by Jews in the modern era—the name of Spinoza stands pre-eminent—one would have expected that in the later literature of the Old Testament philosophical speculation would have been prominent. Such speculation, however, hardly exists. Intellectual activity was applied to the Divine Law; and there resulted a Rabbinic literature 'of which huge portions have little value and little charm.'

[17] C. G. Montefiore, *Judaism and St. Paul*, 1914, p. 46.

I have mentioned three substantial defects in that Rabbinic Judaism which had issued from the Old Testament at the dawn of the Christian era. In addition it is probably true to say that the sense of God's nearness had tended to disappear in the centuries which preceded Christ's coming. To the later of the great Hebrew prophets He was less unapproachable than to the apocalyptic writers. In Rabbinic Judaism there was a gulf that could not be crossed between the Divine and the human. God's transcendence was such that the Divine indwelling in man was unthinkable. There is, I think, a clear difference between such teaching and that of Jesus. Without doubt Jesus felt and taught the nearness of God to man, the possibility of God's presence within us. The idea has become central in Christian theology, for unless there be some ground of union between God and man any intelligible doctrine of the Incarnation is impossible. Thus we can fairly say that Jesus carried the faith which can be distilled from the Old Testament to a higher level in recognizing the truth and value of mystical experience. But we must also admit that the ill-restrained extravagances associated with the mystical temper in Christian literature are alien from the sobriety of Christ's example and teaching.

In one other important point does the faith of the Old Testament differ from Christianity: it had no sacraments. Some Christians would make the fact a strong reason for hostile criticism. Other Christian communions, such as the Society of Friends, would say that Jesus was loyal to the great prophetic tradition in finding God so omnipresent that special sacramental revelations were unnecessary. We who are Modernists judge sacraments by their utility: we are aware of the spiritual value that they can have and not unmindful of the harm to true religion to which mistaken sacramental theory may lead. We know that it is doubtful whether our sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion were instituted by Christ. We are certain that magical, mechanical and unethical sacramental ideas were wholly alien from His thought. Some of us wish that we could speak of St. Paul's thought with the same certainty. At times the great apostle writes in such a way that Schweitzer[18] can con-

[18] A. Schweitzer, *Paul and his Interpreters,* 1912, p. 213.

end that his sacramental teaching is rightly described by the hrase *ex opere operato* : in blunt English it is magical. I doubt his conclusion; but I wish that St. Paul's fine mysticism had been expressed in language less open to criticism. No Christian can deny the religious genius of St. Paul. But those scholars are probably right who assert that his faith before his conversion was colder and more sombre than that which Jesus and the best of the teachers of His time derived from the Old Testament. We follow Saul, the Hellenized Jew, rather than Jesus when we are bitter against unorthodoxy, and when we hold but half-heartedly the truth that God's forgiveness always and with absolute completeness follows man's repentance. That the man who is in Christ is a new creature, we all agree. But he is in Christ when the Master's spirit has captured his whole being. No magic of initiation or sacred food can effect the conquest. No antithesis of faith and works can invalidate the test that we recognize the presence of Christ by the fruits of His Spirit. Without any doubt the teaching of Jesus was nearer than that of St. Paul to the ethical monotheism reached in the Old Testament; and just in so far as the teaching of the apostle allowed the emergence within Christianity of a Catholicism rightly to be classed as a development of the mystery religions of the Roman Empire, it was dangerous and harmful.

So I return to a thought with which I began. We need to read the Old Testament in the light of the New; but we also need to examine the New Testament in the light of the Old if we are to preserve from contamination the religion which Jesus held and taught.

It is probably true to say that differences of belief as to the nature and action of God lie at the basis of every important dispute within the Christian Church to-day. We do well not to minimize such differences but to expose them. Whenever this process is fearlessly carried through, we shall, I believe, find that the truth which we have to affirm is in the teaching of Jesus and that, either in germ or more fully developed, it is also to be found in Old Testament prophecy.

In conclusion I would make a personal confession. However much I may feel attracted at times by other philosophies, I

always return at the end to the ethical monotheism taught by Christ : the Universe was made and is ruled by one God and He is good. To this faith the problem of evil is a challenge which we cannot meet any more successfully now than could the author of the book of Job. But, however often perplexity may obtrude itself, such a faith is not unreasonable. For, though the amount of evil in our world seems unnecessarily large, the fact remains that without imperfection there could be no progress : a perfect world would be static. God's scheme of things seems to be such that by reason of the existence of evil goodness is increased. Man, the product of Nature's process, is so made that misery and wrong spur him to seek better things. God is, in truth, working His purpose out, though His methods are to us obscure and perplexing. The splendid faith reached by the great Hebrew prophets was the triumph of the religious insight of men who most often have been dismayed by the power of evil. That faith, moreover, is at the very centre of the gospel. Jesus, dying on the Cross, gave to His followers a supreme lesson of trust in the goodness of our Father in Heaven.

THE NEW TESTAMENT IN RELATION TO THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

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At first sight it may seem that the using of the phrase, 'The origin and development of the Christian Religion,' instead of 'The origin and development of the Christian Church,' was but the result of an effort to avoid the very difficult question, 'What is the Church?' by raising another equally difficult question, 'What is the Christian religion?' It would appear, however, that there is much more in the choice of the particular title than this. While it is true that, in thought, the Christian religion and the Christian Church tend to be fused together, and the one idea runs into the other, it is of first importance that we should differentiate between the two. We might say indeed that the Christian Church is a product of the Christian religion. It may be at once admitted that without the Christian Church there could be for us no Christian religion; the former is the vehicle of continuance of the latter. But it still remains true that the Christian religion is prior to the Christian Church. Although we might at once add that a Church was of the very nature of that religion, and that there would be no Christian religion without the Christian Church. Therefore, to account for the Christian Church we must assume behind it a Christian religion that can at least be for purposes of discussion differentiated from the Christian Church. It is true, of course, that there has been inter-action and that the Church once created by the Christian religion has in turn modified and in part created that religion. It is equally true that the artist is in his turn modified, and in part created, by the picture he creates. It is true, none the less, that first comes the artist. If then we would discuss the origin of Christianity it is the Christian religion that we must ultimately consider, even though it may be in the Church we learn of that religion.

Yet supposing we are agreed that the Christian religion is prior to the Christian Church, we can find a still more important reason for differentiation between the Church and the Religion. The Church belongs essentially to the corpus—qahal, ecclesia, assembly, congregation. This will be freely admitted. Religion on the other hand supposes ultimately the individual. This will be as freely denied. For it might be said that the study of Primitive Religion has revealed quite clearly that religion emerged long before the self-conscious individual, and that Primitive Religion was entirely of the corpus. The individual had no existence at all save as a part of a larger entity, the family, the clan, the tribe; religion consisted of the relation between the corpus and its god. Here a tremendous discussion of Anthropology and Comparative Religion might well arise, but at least we should find agreement in this, that it was with the gradual emergence of the individual, with his critical faculties and his value judgments, that religion was raised from magic, and mumbo-jumbo, to become spiritual religion. We should probably agree also in calling the religion of Jeremiah the loftiest in the Old Testament, loftier even than that of an Amos, because in the last resource it was based upon his personal relationship with Yahweh. When we speak of a loftier religion we mean a religion that is nearer to religion as religion should be; that is a truer religion. We do not deny that Totemism is some kind of religion, but we say that a religion based upon a personal relation between a man and God, is a truer religion. This is not for a moment to suggest that religion is other than social. Man is gregarious, and men are not natural Robinson Crusoes. Without religion men are social, and with religion their society becomes a religious society, that is a Church. Yet prior to that particular manifestation of man's gregariousness, the Church, is religion, and this in the last resort, or at its highest, is personal and of the individual.

It is usual for those who, having made strenuous use of Newman's *Doctrine of Development*, still wish to defend as pure a Church as little related to the Church of the New Testament as is the Thistle to the Fig, to argue also, when pressed by historical evidence, that 'after all the Church wrote the New

Testament.' This argument, if argument it is, assumes that the Church may do what she will with her own. Quite apart from a whole arsenal of dangers that arise from the notion of 'doing as she will,' the truth is that the Church does not deal with her own. The Church quite certainly has been the guardian and preserver of the New Testament, but rather than the New Testament being the property of the Church, it might be said with a far greater measure of truth that the Church is the property of the New Testament. Actually, both the New Testament and the Church were created by the Christian Religion. Both came into being as the result of a certain changed attitude of a few men and women towards God and the Universe which occurred some thirty years after the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. This new attitude towards God and the Universe was itself created by, and was dependent upon, a fact in history. This fact in history was the personality of Jesus. His personality, or His spirit, had such an influence upon, first, a few Galileans and then, through them upon a larger world that a new religion was born, the Christian religion. Here it is that the origin of the Christian religion is to be found — in the impingement of the spirit of Jesus upon His disciples and through them upon other men and women. True it is that much is 'given.' There is the long story from Hittite and wandering Aramaean, through the prophets, and on to the synagogue. Nevertheless, the origin of the Christian religion is here; in the impact of the personality of Jesus upon His followers and through them upon the world.

It was this impingement of the spirit of Jesus upon men and women that produced both the New Testament and the Church. It was inevitable that the men and women who shared a common experience, just because man is what he is, should become a corpus, a fellowship. Moreover, the quality of that experience, which resulted in their certainty that God was their Father, decided the quality of that corpus. Yet it was these individuals who were drawn together by a common experience who wrote the New Testament. It was not written by the corpus but by those individuals who together composed it. It was the direct result of the influence of the personality of Jesus upon the hearts and minds of the men who wrote it. Now this is not to say that the

New Testament may be likened to literature of the kind of Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*, although there are parts of the New Testament which would not make this utterly untrue. It was not, save to a very small extent, a spontaneous outflowing of words from those who were moved by the personality of Jesus. The phrase of the Form Critics, 'In the beginning was the sermon,' is misleading, since the truth is that 'in the beginning was the personality of Jesus,' yet the New Testament is concerned always with a situation. A large part of it is taken up in dealing with the difficulties of erstwhile pagans, undisciplined by the synagogue, who had felt the power of the personality of Jesus through those who had known Him in the flesh, or who had themselves but felt it through other men and women. Even the Synoptic Gospels for so long believed to be 'Lives of Jesus,' or even taken together, a 'Life of Jesus,' are now admitted to be not biographies at all. *Mark*, the earliest gospel, if we accept the statement of Papias, does not contain 'the memoirs of a historian,' but 'the memoirs of a preacher,' even though that preacher was the eye witness Peter. Yet, nevertheless, than the New Testament we can get no closer to origin, to the origin of the Christian religion.

It was the personality of Jesus which produced the New Testament and the Christian Church. But herein is the authority of the New Testament: it is the closest picture, or better expressed, it contains the material out of which the closest picture of Jesus can be drawn, although that picture be but a sketch. The materials are few, and almost all are overlaid with that element of development, explanation, theology, as well as presupposition, and the distortions of a particular need. The men who wrote the Gospels read back much which they deemed ought to be, because of the certainty of their experience of the power of the personality of Jesus. The men who knew Him best were convinced by the influence of His spirit that He was the long-expected Messiah. They called Him this because they had no other language that could for them more adequately describe the power of His personality. But just because they called Him Messiah, we find *Mark* piled up with signs and wonders that a Messiah should perform, and the author of the First Gospel convinced that the Messiah of *Mark*, who could do no mighty work

in Nazareth, is an impossibility, and he makes the significant change, 'He would do no mighty work there.' Yet, despite this, there is in the New Testament, behind the sources, a personality that can be seen and heard. This is the sheet anchor of Christianity. Here it is rooted in history. Here is its challange to, and conquest of, the mystery cults, of the greatest of which it might have been said, although with a sigh, 'There never was a Mythra and he never slew a bull.'

If Christianity may be defined as that attitude towards the universe, which supposes the universe to be ultimately the expression of the mind of One who can be most clearly seen in Jesus, and this is what the Nicene Creed declares, then in the end, it is to the New Testament that we must turn for the origin of the Christian religion. We need not deny that the New Testament is often 'a riddle.' It can be said with certainty that without the evidence of changed men and women, the evidence of personalities influenced by the personality of Jesus, then our evidence as contained in the New Testament is entirely insufficient. We have no need to deny that we see Him even to-day in those influenced by His spirit through other men who are themselves influenced through the generations of nineteen hundred years back to Palestine, but for the origin of these particular personalities which manifest His spirit we must go back to the New Testament.

This takes us to a further stage in a showing of an authority of the New Testament in relation to the Church, which was founded by the influence of the same personality and by whose members the New Testament was written. In the New Testament we see the first society of those who had followed Jesus, as well as the effect of His spirit upon individual men and women. We are able to see the first fruits of the spirit. We may admit at once that the grain of mustard seed there planted grew into a great tree. We may note its growth and development. We may insist that it was organic and growing, and that development was of its essence. In other words, we should not expect to find the Church of the Middle Ages precisely the same as the Church of the first century, neither the Church of the twentieth century the same as the Church of the Middle Ages nor of the first cen-

tury. But the authority of the New Testament lies in this, that we are able to see what the tree was that was there first planted. We know its first fruits. By this we are able to test its later growth. By means of a knowledge of the New Testament, we are able to discover that the mistletoe which flourishes and brings forth its fruit in due season is not of the true stock, but is a parasite. We can learn whether the religion and the Church that we know is of the genuine Christian religion.

In order that we may examine the young tree we must consider not only the origin of the Christian religion but its evolution also. Evolution includes, even in these days of emergent evolution, not only 'the after,' 'the Emergent,' but also 'the before'; to keep to our analogy we have to view not only the growth above ground but we have also to examine the roots—for this paper, that is, the roots so far as they are revealed in the New Testament.

While we no longer dream of beginning the Bible, Part II, with Matthew when we have completed Part I with Malachi, knowing that there is a great gulf fixed between the Old and the New Testaments, it is probable that we have been too willing to bridge the gulf by means of the Apocalyptic Literature. Because the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha fall between the Old and the New Testaments, we have tried to build a bridge thereby which cannot stand the weight imposed upon it. Here, in Apocalyptic, is a root of the New Testament. It will account for some of the above-ground growth; for instance, the communistic experiment at Jerusalem, the note of urgency that is characteristic of the earlier strata of the New Testament, which tends later either to fade away, as in the Fourth Gospel and *Ephesians*, or to intensify as in the *Apocalypse*; it can be seen too in the Second Adventism which strove to make prophesy come true. It is a root but not more. It is not true to say that when all the apocalyptic is taken from the Synoptic Gospels there is nothing left. We may well say that the disregard of the apocalyptic element by liberal scholars, until they were chastised by Weiss and Schweitzer, resulted in a bourgeois history that was distorted enough to be untrue, but the fact remains that there is a large element in the Synoptics which is not of the apocalyptic order at all. This is true of Q and L on the whole, and even in the

First Gospel, with its love of apocalyptic heightening, M contains much that is not apocalyptic. Schweitzer has to strain his ingenuity to breaking point to make the Beatitudes apocalyptic. Apocalyptic is a factor to be considered in the evolution of the Christian religion, but it is not more than a factor. Apocalyptic was not characteristic Judaism, and Judaism is the parent of Christianity.

We long took for granted, with what error we are now beginning to learn, that characteristic Judaism before A.D. 70 was the religion of the Temple. We apparently found no difficulty in assuming that it was able to change its character with catastrophic suddenness after the destruction of Jerusalem and was able to continue its existence without the Temple and the Temple's sacrifices. This — despite the fact that we had glibly learned that, 'Judaism, with the publication of D, became the religion of a Book.'

The truth is that for many years before the destruction of the Temple, the life-stream of Judaism flowed not from the Temple but from the Synagogue. The Temple was an archaism. It continued with its pouring out of blood to Yahweh, while in the synagogue the Pious concerned themselves with the study of the Torah, which was believed by them to be the revelation of the mind of Yahweh. The Torah included instructions for the temple worship and was mixed up with hand-washings and bowl-washings, with the correct length of fringes and the proper fastenings of phylactries, and with tithes on all manner of herbs for the especially holy. Yet the Torah, with the vast oral development, was at essense ethical. It was the aim of the rabbis to work out for the ordinary relationships of life Micah's message from Yahweh, 'Do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with thy God.' This Judaism was not a religion of priests and sacrifices. Salvation was to be obtained not by the blood of sacrificed lambs but by the keeping of the Torah-halachah. Why the Temple with its priests, its reek of blood, and its necessarily accompanying idea of a Yahweh pleased by such things continued, it is not hard to discover. Archaisms do survive with an amazing vitality — the pineal eye still, I understand, leaves its trace in the human head, while the wisdom tooth still continues to bemoan the smaller jaw. That the heart of Judaism was not

in the Temple is made certain by the fact that Judaism continued its way extraordinarily unruffled, and has continued so to do for nineteen hundred years, without a temple. This is a matter of great importance to a consideration of the evolution of the Christian religion, and we may ask the question — is Christianity of the Synagogue or of the Temple? To anticipate the form of the question as it would be asked in a larger discussion, beyond the New Testament — is Christianity a religion of priests and sacrifices or a religion of revelation based in sound ethics?

The part played by the Temple in the New Testament is strikingly small. It is not necessary here to discuss the chronology of the Gospels or the question of the number of visits paid by Jesus to the Temple. It is clear enough that the Temple played the same part in His life as it did in that of the average pious Jew of the day. It was the ancient shrine to which every pious Jew endeavoured to make an annual pilgrimage at least on the occasion of the great Passover Festival. To the question that might be raised — Why did Jesus pay any regard to an archaism? — we can only answer that He was a Jew of the first century. His teaching contains nothing about the Temple and its sacrifice, even if we accept as His *ipsissima verba*, the Ransom passage. His methods were the methods of the rabbis and His teaching, although it bears the hall-mark of a unique genius, is that of the rabbis. It is true that He surprised and shocked His contemporaries by His personal authority rather than that of tradition, as well as by His somewhat lax attitude towards the Halachah, and quite certainly He put personalities before laws, but nevertheless, in so far as He is able to be understood in terms of His background, the Judaism of Jesus was in the end the Judaism of the rabbis, who were the sons of the prophets even though disobedient sons. The Christian Church, that is the Christian Church of the New Testament, is a child of the Synagogue and not of the Temple.

All this is reflected in the New Testament. The young tree grows as a study of its roots would lead us to expect. The personalities kindled by the personality of Jesus sought to fire other personalities. Without discussing the universalistic commands in the First Gospel it is quite clear that only slowly did the implications of the teaching of Jesus become at all plain to His

followers. They remain nationalistic Jews for years. At first they take for granted Judaism. They said virtually that the Pharisees, the rabbis, had the true religion save that they were wrong in not accepting Jesus as the Messiah. Apparently they had not the least idea of how utterly revolutionary their teaching of a Suffering Messiah was; and almost at once they obscured the colossal idea of a Messiah who should suffer, with Apocalyptic dreams.

On the whole it seems to be true that they taught 'about Jesus' first. This is not to say, as Kirsopp Lake seems to do, that the teaching of Jesus was preserved only as an afterthought. It is not that men were first interested in Jesus and therefore wished to learn what He had said. What He said was a part of Him: His personality is revealed in His sayings. However, we can hardly dare say that Q, the sayings of Jesus, comes first. Actually the two cannot be separated; the teaching about Jesus must include the teaching of Jesus, and the teaching of Jesus depends upon the teaching about Jesus.

There are two strata in the New Testament woven together. The one, testimony, that is the attempt to describe the experience which resulted from the impingement of the personality of Jesus upon the writer's personality, and which inevitably includes some kind of picture of the influencing personality. The other is concerned with the formation and organization of the corpus, the Church. To treat them apart can give a false impression. In a way they are the warp and the woof of the same weaving. With the testimony of Peter's speeches in *Acts* i to xii we see also the formation of the Jewish Church. At first the teaching that this Jesus was the Messiah did not disturb the ordinary synagogue life. Those who were Christians still continued in their synagogues. The experiment of common property was not enormously revolutionary and would not have shocked orthodox Jews. It was to them but another manifestation of Messianism.

It was Stephen who was the great revolutionary. He saw the implications of the preaching of Peter. If Jesus was the Messiah —that is, making a desperately long chronological leap, to express this in the language of nineteen centuries after, if Jesus was the highest value known to men — then the whole religious edifice built upon Abraham and Palestine and the Temple had had its

day and ceased to be. With Stephen a new stage is reached in the evolution of the Christian religion. Upon this stage Paul appears.

St. Paul had felt the power of the personality of Jesus through the followers of Jesus, chiefly it would seem through Stephen himself, who had probably never seen Jesus in the flesh. To Paul the universalism of Christianity which had been gradually forcing itself upon the minds of the Christians became obvious. It was not essentially foreign to Judaism, but was now released from its nationalism betrayed by circumcision and food laws. Paul preached the personality of Jesus. This we know, but not more. It is futile to argue that he taught 'about Jesus' rather than the 'teaching of Jesus.' We possess no specimen of his teaching; we can see but hints behind the particular matters of which he writes. Yet it is extremely hard to see how he could preach 'Christ and him crucified,' without preaching also the 'teaching of Jesus.' Paul made no mistake about the kind of Messiah Jesus was. I *Cor* xiii makes it quite clear that he knew the teaching of Jesus. His aim was to make possible for other men and women the experience that he himself had known of the impingement of the personality of Jesus upon his own personality. This aim he shares with the other New Testament writers except when he or they are concerned with particular problems of conduct and organization in the society formed as a result of that personality working among men. They strove to express in words their experience, each building upon his own assumptions, painting with his own colours, using his own language and thought form. The danger of this, in spite of its inevitability, is obvious. Foreign ideas were imported with foreign tongues, as the post-Apostolic Age shows only too clearly, and here we see the continual need to get back to origin.

In the Synoptics there is development, yet we can get back a long way. Mark, with all his brightened colours, gives at least a glimpse of Jesus and sometimes we can see Him, though but for a moment, vividly. Q may well be of Apostolic origin, and, at least possibly, if only we could discover its Aramaic form, we might hear his actual words as they were remembered by a listener. L is another set of sayings, which if they are of a little later stratum than Q, bear the hall-mark of unique quality. The

author of the First Gospel gives all his matter his own peculiar turn, yet it may well be that we have still another set of authentic sayings in M. We can see, though with misty outline, the personality that influenced the hearts and minds of those who wrote the Gospels: and the personality which they endeavoured to preach in order that other men and women might be influenced thereby.

In the Fourth Gospel we get a picture seen from a greater distance. History is sometimes there, but on the whole the picture is not of the Jesus who walked the roads of Palestine some seventy years before but of the Jesus whom the author knew in his own present experience and in the lives of other men. It may be that his purpose was not only to describe Jesus in what he believed to be more adequate terms, using Logos or Memra instead of Messiah, but also to remind his readers of origins, that the Jesus whom they called Lord was the Jesus who had lived in Palestine. The Fourth Gospel, although not so near to origin as the Synoptics, and despite the fact that it seems to be of a different order, has its source in them. It is born of the Judaism which produced Jesus also. It is unnecessary to discuss here whether behind it we are to see Philo and Alexandria, or the rabbis and Tiberias. It takes up the idea of Torah, instruction, revelation, and describes Jesus as the true Torah, the word of Yahweh, now spoken in terms of flesh and blood.

The Epistle of St. James shows another line of development, or rather it may be that there is less development. Here we probably see the Christian synagogue not yet much modified by contact with the Gentile world. The author writes for those disciplined by long Jewish training in practical ethics. It is not so white-hot as the Pauline writings. It is not so valuable to burn down opposition, but it is sane and sound and of the genuine stock. In this epistle we hear Q and L again.

Hebrews stands by itself. It used the language and thought that might have been expected had no Mishnaic, no Rabbinic, and no Apocalyptic developments taken place. It may be that it was written for those who still looked back sadly to the old order of priests and sacrifices. It may be it was written by one who had himself lived by the priestly tradition in Israel. If we allow that there were sincere Sadducees, then it is pos-

sible that it was written by a Sadducee, become Christian, who strove to account for his experience in the terminology that he knew. The great influence that this homiletic treatise has had upon the development of the Christian religion it is not hard to understand. Here was language familiar enough to the pagan world, though outgrown by Judaism, or used only in allegory. The Septuagint supplied cruder material to those converts who could not understand the prophets but could grasp well enough *Leviticus* and the blood-smeared altar.

The *Apocalypse* represents the climax of a particular development in early Christianity. It strikes back to *Mark* and beyond *Mark* to the Apocalyptic that was a part of the background of Jesus Himself. Why it should be so intensified, that it is here playing a larger part in Christianity than it did in Judaism, was not so much due to the fact that on the whole the first Jewish Christians were of the *Am Ha Aretz* (or perhaps 'the men in the street') rather than the students of the Rabbinic schools, but because the whole apparatus of shining clouds and dragons and supernatural messiahs eased the scandal of the Cross for those who still found intolerable, despite their certainty of the power of the personality of Jesus, the notion of a suffering Messiah. Moreover, Apocalyptic eased the scandal of the Cross as it was borne by scores of simple Christians at the beginning of the second century who were persecuted for their adherence to the new religion.

All this attempting to express and explain experience, which is history and theology, must be seen against the background of the corpus, the fellowship of men and women with a common experience. This fellowship took to itself the name of its Jewish parents, Qahal, Ecclesia. It was not conscious borrowing, but rather these men and women, Jews now Christians, believed that they were the true Ecclesia and the true sons of Abraham, while their brethren who would not believe that Jesus was the Messiah were the apostates and the false claimants to the title 'the congregation of God.' It was therefore natural enough that the old organization was taken for granted, the Temple and the Synagogue. The first Christians joined in the Temple worship as did their Jewish kinsfolk, but like Judaism, despite its Temple,

Christianity was a lay religion differing from Judaism in that it had no priesthood at all. Nor was there any need for such. Its acts of worship — the breaking of the bread, the familiar Kiddush, and the baptism of converts — required no priest; neither did its prayers and its readings of the Scripture. Soon, however, it became clear that Judaism would have none of this new sect, and even before the break finally occurred the sect had its own troubles, making organization imperative. The Eleven were the obvious leaders. They were the friends of the Founder. They were the Elders, Zekennim, of the Christian synagogue. These Elders appointed 'the Seven.' These latter were the Gabai Zedekah, deacons of the synagogue, whose business it was, and still is, to distribute the charities of the synagogue. Here was the normal Jewish organization in the Christian Church in Jerusalem.

In the Greek world, whither the missionary, the apostle, carried the Gospel, the situation was very different. There was no nucleus of the faithful to form a Board of Elders, nor were the pagans accustomed to the ordered arrangements of the synagogue. The missionaries were Jews, so that they always had in mind the synagogue pattern. They appointed Elders, Zekennim. But the appointment had to be arbitrary. Only the missionary knew the situation. He had to leave what he believed to be the best man in charge. Thus apostolic appointment arose from sheer necessity, but here is the beginning of organization that is not exactly of the synagogue model. We can trace the developing organization from the Christian synagogue in the *Acts*, through the Pauline Epistles, until in the Pastorals the synagogue has been left behind although there is not the least trace of any kind of notion of a priesthood in the New Testament. Here it is true to stock.

Far back in Abraham and the prophets is rooted the young tree, the Christian religion, which is none the less the peculiar creation of the spirit of Jesus working upon, and through, the minds of men and women. In the New Testament there is as yet no creed, although queer speculation as well as homiletic need was making some kind of doctrinal statement necessary. The test of the validity of the religion is, to the end of the New

Testament canon, not credal. As the religion was a new attitude toward the universe through Jesus, so the new attitude was itself the test of its genuineness as it was worked out in the ordinary ways of life. *πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον* in St. Paul; *ἀγάπη* in the Johannine writings; 'to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction,' in James; 'love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous,' in the Petrine Epistle; and, to the end of the canon, soundness in doctrine is 'uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity.'

Soon enough parasites grew upon the young tree. Pagans imported into the new religion ideas from the mysteries; and much those new converts found in the Old Testament that was not very different from their old way of thinking. Crude superstition soon marred the growth of the new religion. Before very long the religion, half paganized, became commercialized also. The result is that in much of its later manifestation, its early growth and fruits seem to have disappeared. It appears another and different religion. But we have the New Testament and by means of it we can find our way back again to origins, and from its study we may learn what we are to preserve and what we are to prune away. We can discover the Christian religion.

VARIETIES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

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THE subject which has been allocated to me is one of considerable difficulty and complexity, and to deal with it at all adequately in a single paper impossible. Dean Farrar required a whole course of Bampton Lectures for the task.[1] I cannot therefore attempt anything beyond a mere outline, supported by a number of illustrations. Probably when we have reached the end of our survey you will be tempted to feel that, whilst much in the methods described has been interesting and quaint, there was little that was useful as a guide to the actual meaning of the Bible. This may well be so, and to recognize it is one of the most important fruits of our study; for it was by men whose mental habits are revealed in such methods that the doctrines of our faith were formulated. 'The History of Doctrine,' as Bishop Chase once wrote, 'cannot be rightly understood apart from the History of Interpretation.'[2]

The message contained in the various books of the Old and New Testaments had, we may presume, a plain meaning for its first hearers. But times and conditions change very speedily, and even words themselves take on other meanings; in consequence, what has been written or spoken becomes obscure. This is, of course, true of all literature. The *Divina Commedia* of Dante required commentators within the lifetime of those who had been the poet's younger contemporaries. With forgetfulness of the original circumstances comes the temptation, in the case of all great literatures, to apply the individual passages to new instances; often without any consideration for their context or their first meaning. This has recently been pointed out, in another connexion, by the late Professor Conway in his Hibbert Lectures. 'It has been the misfortune of every great book,' he

[1] Published under the title *The History of Interpretation.* My debt to this volume is considerable, though most of the examples of exegesis which I shall quote come from my own reading.

[2] *Chrysostom: a Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation,* p. viii.

says, 'not excepting some of the most sacred, that particular portions and texts have been torn from their context, divorced altogether from the life in which their author first conceived them and to which he was conscious that they referred, and then applied, sometimes with amazing results, to circumstances entirely different.'[3]

I.

Our first task is to consider various methods of exegesis which found favour in the past. Dean Farrar, in the work to which I have already referred,[4] divided them into seven distinct systems or periods. These he named: (1) The Rabbinic; (2) The Alexandrian; (3) The Patristic; (4) The Scholastic; (5) The Reformation; (6) The Post-Reformation; (7) The Modern, that is, the system in vogue during the middle years of the last century up to the time when the lectures were delivered. These divisions may still be accepted, if it is remembered that they overlap considerably, and that a further period seems to be required, since the discoveries of archaeologists and the fresh material which they have made available both for history and philology mark a new epoch.[5]

I propose now to say a little about each of Farrar's first six divisions. The latest period I shall leave, as I imagine that those who attend Conferences of Modern Churchmen or read the report of their proceedings have some knowledge of the methods now in use. It will suffice to point out that such methods are not entirely peculiar, but can be found in quite early days — they were in use in the School of Antioch—and were revived, in part, at the Renaissance—one recalls Colet's famous Lectures on St. Paul: their full application, however, had to wait until the nineteenth century. In our own branch of the Church two landmarks may be observed: Jowett's contribution to *Essays and Reviews* in 1860, and Gore's article in *Lux Mundi*.

[3] R. S. Conway, *Ancient Italy and Modern Religion*, p. 99.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

[5] On the Old Testament side I. Abrahams claims that 'in lexicography' they make changes 'so far-reaching as to mark an entirely new era in interpretation' (*The People and the Book*, p. 420). For the New Testament side see Moulton, *Grammar of New Testament Greek* I (*Prolegomena*), and his essay, 'New Testament Greek in the Light of Modern Discovery,' in *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, pp. 463 *ff*.

(1) *Rabbinic Exegesis.*[6]

Rabbinic exegesis is the manifestation of a spirit which searched the Scriptures and endeavoured to adjust them to 'the changes and expansions of ethical and theological ideals.'[7] Its methods go far back into pre-Christian days, but the first real attempt to form them into a system is contained in the Rules of Hillel (*d.* 8 A.D.). These were seven in number (later to be expanded into thirteen), and became a kind of standard by which every attempt at exegesis might be tested.[8] The rules may be summarized as follows: (1) Light and heavy—that is, argument from less to greater and *vice versa*; (2) Equivalence—that is, the use of an identical expression concerning two different subjects shows that they are connected; (3) Deduction from the special to the general; (4) The explanation of two passages by a third; (5) Deduction from general to special; (6) The analogy of parallel passages; (7) Inference from context. Rabbinic exegesis has had many hard words spoken against it, and even Israel Abrahams admits that 'Grotesque is a mild term to apply to it. Its verbal distortions, its subtle yet childish ingenuities, its illogical pretensions to logic, these bewilder and pain.'[9] None the less there was much in it that was natural and helpful, and condemnation must not be unmitigated. Abrahams condemns Farrar on the ground that 'his investigations were too superficial to permit him to discern the real insight into the Bible which underlies a large part of the exegesis.'[10]

(2) *Alexandrian Exegesis.*[11]

The influence of Alexandria on the Jewish people and their ideas is too widely recognized to need emphasis. It has been said that if Egypt had been the House of Bondage for the fathers of the Hebrew race, it became the House of Enlightenment for

[6] See further Farrar, *op. cit.* Lecture II; Israel Abrahams, 'Rabbinic Aids to Exegesis' in *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, pp. 163 *ff.*, and 'Jewish Interpretation of the Old Testament' in *The People and the Book*, pp. 403 *ff.*

[7] I. Abrahams, *Short History of Jewish Literature*, p. 29.

[8] See I. Abrahams, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[9] In *The People and the Book*, p. 425.

[10] *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, pp. 169 *f.*

[11] See further Farrar, *op. cit.* Lecture III, and for the importance of Alexandrian influence in general a suggestive essay by E. F. Scott, *The Gospel and its Tributaries*, pp. 156 *ff.*

their children. The predominant feature of this type of exegesis was the use of allegory. This use goes back into remote times; it had, indeed, been applied to Homer and other early Greek writings. Plato, in spite of the fact that his own teaching — that visible objects are but the reflection of heavenly realities—seems to open the door to allegory, condemned the system as confusing to the inexperienced.[12] It was, however, much used by the Stoics,[13] a fact which Origen urged in its favour when arguing with Celsus.[14]

The great name in this school is, of course, Philo. He professed to have regard to the literal sense, though obviously he looked upon it as greatly inferior to the allegorical. The latter, he held, should be used to avoid unworthy representations of God or apparent contradictions; when superfluous words or repetitions occur; when a play on words is possible; or when vocabulary or grammar is abnormal.[15] The various schools of interpretation he divided up into the Literalists, the Rationalists and the Allegorists.

(3) *Patristic Exegesis.*[16]

Among the Fathers of the Church there was no official method of interpretaton, and Philo might have found examples of his Literalists in Tertullian and Cyprian, of Rationalists in the School of Antioch, and of Allegorists in Clement and Origen and the School of Alexandria. On these two schools, from whose rivalry much dissension arose, a few words may be said.

In the School of Alexandria, Clement and Origen are outstanding. The former held that there were four methods of interpretation, which he termed the Historical, the Symbolical, the Moral, and the Prophetical.[17] Origen, however, reduced these to three, which corresponded to man's Body, Soul and Spirit; they were the Literal, the Moral and the Spiritual.[18] The two

[12] *Republic* II (p. 378, DE).

[13] See Zeller, *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics* (English Translation), pp. 334*f*.

[14] *Adv. Cels.*, iv, 48.

[15] See *De Leges Allegoriis, De Somnis* i, 40, *Quod Deus Immutabilis* xi.

[16] See Farrar, *op. cit.* Lecture IV.

[17] *Stromateis* I, xxviii, 179.

[18] Origen's use of terms is not always consistent or exact, but the above division seems to underlie his system : see Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 136 (2nd Edition, p. 174), and Darwell Stone in *The New (S.P.C.K.) Commentary*, p. 697.

latter naturally allowed the use of allegory. A good example of his usage is the treatment of *John* ii, 6, in which this threefold system is itself exhibited as well as applied. 'As some Scriptures have not the bodily element,' he wrote, 'we ought to seek out the spirit and the soul of the passage only. This may be the reason that the water-pots . . . contain two or three firkins apiece. . . . The Scripture sometimes contains only two firkins, that is, the psychic and the spiritual message; sometimes three, when the bodily element is also useful for edifying.'[19] Origen was really too great for any school, and in his insistence on the value of grammar he was in agreement with the School of Antioch.[20] Athanasius, although he applied *Deut.* xxviii, 66, 'Thy life shall hang in doubt before thee,' to our Lord's crucifixion,[21] was surprisingly restrained in his use of allegory.[22]

The School of Antioch, in the words of Farrar, 'possessed a deeper insight into the true methods of exegesis than any which preceded or succeeded it during a thousand years.'[23] Even when allegory was used, as at times it was, the historical sense was always primary. It was perhaps in the interpretation of Messianic prophecy, above all other themes, that the Antiochenes showed their sagacity. This was put on a sound basis by Theodore of Mopsuestia.[24] Such prophecies were divided by him into three categories: (1) Those applying primarily to Christ and with no other historical reference; (2) Those referring to other Old Testament events or characters, but which furnish types; (3) Those whose meaning is exhausted by historical reference in the Old Testament itself.[25]

(4) *Scholastic Exegesis.*[26]

The origins of Scholasticism are obscure and there is no agreement as to when the first Schoolman arose. Much of its

[19] *Philocal.* I, xii (ed. Armitage Robinson, p. 19).

[20] On Origen's accurate use of grammar see Lightfoot, *Epistle to the Galatians,* p. 223.

[21] *De Incarnatione,* xxxv, 2 (ed. Robertson, p. 51).

[22] See Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism,* pp. 44 and 68.

[23] *Op. cit.,* p. 210.

[24] See Kihn, *Theodor von Mopsuestia,* pp. 134 *ff.*

[25] For the principles of Messianic Prophecy worked out by Chrysostom see Chase, *op. cit.,* pp. 69 *ff.*

[26] See Farrar, *op. cit.* Lecture V, and Binns, *The Reformers and the Bible,* pp. 1 *ff.*

phraseology it owed to Boethius (480-524), and he has left behind a sane rule for exegesis. It recognizes that there are in Scripture passages which must be taken literally, as setting forth historic facts; there are others which are pure allegory; and there are others, again, in which history and allegory are combined.[27]

The greatest of the Schoolmen was St. Thomas Aquinas (*d.* 1274). He taught that in addition to the literal sense there was also a threefold spiritual sense: the allegorical, the moral or tropological, and the anagogical. Thus the words at Creation, 'Let there be light,' have, in addition to their literal meaning, an allegorical, 'Let Christ be Love'; an anagogical, 'May we be led by Christ to glory'; and a tropological, 'May our minds be illuminated by Christ.'[28] His contemporary, St. Bonaventura, after likening this scheme to the river of Paradise which divided into four heads, proceeded to improve upon it by adding three more senses—the symbolic, the synecdochic, and the hyperbolic; thus making up the perfect number seven, and agreeing with the seven seals of the Apocalypse.

(5) *Reformation Exegesis.*[29]

The most marked feature of Reformation exegesis was the rejection of allegory. Luther called it 'a beautiful and seducing harlot,' 'a monkey-trick'; even St. Paul's practice does not permit the Christian to follow his example except in using it as a means of ornament; whilst some of the patristic allegories 'are not worth so much dirt.' Here Luther was both violent and inconsistent, since he himself can hardly escape the charge of making use of the very method which he condemned, for in his efforts to see Christ and the Gospels everywhere in the Scriptures he adopted methods of exegesis which cannot be termed

[27] *De Fide Catholica* (ed. Stewart and Rand, p. 58). As this treatise is not well known it may be well to quote the original: 'Omnis enim diuina auctoritas his modis constare uidetur, ut aut historialis modus sit, qui nihil aliud nisi res gestas enuntiet, aut allegoricus, ut non illic possit historiae ordo consistere, aut certe ex utrisque compositus, ut et secundum historiam et secundum allegoriam manere uideatur.'

[28] Quoted by Farrar, *op. cit.*, p. 259. I have not had the opportunity of verifying this quotation, but it would seem that 'Let Christ be Light' might be more suitable as the allegorical meaning.

[29] See Farrar, *op. cit.*, Lecture VI, and Binns, *The Reformers and the Bible*, pp. 19*ff.*

anything else than allegorical. The robust common sense of Calvin, however, rejected such methods, and in the proof of Christian doctrine he would have none of their aid. For example, he did not allow that 'seed' in *Gen.* ii, 15 (in spite of St. Paul), had originally any reference to Christ; the three travellers in *Gen.* xviii, 2, and the threefold 'Holy' of *Is.* vi, 3, are not to be taken as anticipations of the Trinity; nor must we see in the Burning Bush (here he contradicts Luther) a symbol of the Incarnation.

The Reformers, although professing to believe in an inerrant Bible, were drastic in their use of 'Higher Criticism' when it suited their purpose. As is well known, Luther rejected the *Epistle of St. James*, and in addition he 'denied the Mosaic authorship of part of the Pentateuch; declared *Job* to be an allegory; *Jonah* was so childish that he was almost inclined to laugh at it; and the *Books of Kings* were "a thousand paces ahead of *Chronicles* and more to be believed."'[30]

Calvin was almost as drastic in his exegesis, and just as inconsistent with his own declared principles as Luther. His dismissal of the Levitical system is almost contemptuous; and he did not scruple to condemn the idea of God making His throne over the Mercy Seat as 'a crass figment.' We need not wonder that other Reformers accused him of robbing the Christian of the weapons in which he had been told to trust;[31] nor that Hunnius, a later Reformer, held that he ought to have been burnt.

(6) *Post-Reformation Exegesis.*[32]

The exegesis of the later Reformers, like that of the Schoolmen, was controlled by dogmatic assumptions; they made their appeal to the divine oracle, and it answered them according to their own wishes. Although allegory had in theory been rejected, in reality it was rejected only when used to support Roman doctrines. The system of interpretation adopted by this class of Reformers was full of distortions and sophistries, and one writer accuses them of turning the Old Testament especially into 'a

[30] Preserved Smith, *Life and Letters of Martin Luther*, p. 268.

[31] Montacute, *Orig. Eccles.* I, p. 310.

[32] See Farrar, *op. cit.* Lecture VII, and Binns, *op. cit.* pp. 29*ff*, from which the following account has been abstracted.

sort of obscure forest in which dogma and allegory hunt in couples to catch what they can.' By adopting this method weapons were always ready at hand for use against the Papists, nor were they the first to use them; readers of Calvin's commentaries on the Old Testament can hardly fail to be struck by the harsh way in which he turns the attacks of the prophets on the priests of the Old Covenant into a condemnation of his contemporaries. Bitterness such as this arouses only opposition and does not really serve truth. One of the causes of the attempted suppression of Tyndale's version of the Scriptures — another was the large number of errors it was supposed to contain—was the bitterness of the marginal notes.[33]

Protestant Scholasticism, like its forerunner, eventually made men lose all interest in the Bible as a living book, and degraded it into a storehouse of texts from which men could obtain arguments in favour of their peculiar dogmas. Hooker's wise forecast of the result of such a policy, had it been regarded, might have saved German Protestantism from much suffering and unbelief. 'Whatsoever is spoken of God or things pertaining to God otherwise than as the truth is; though it seem an honour, it is an injury. And as incredible praises given unto men do often abate and impair the credit of their deserved commendation; so we must likewise take great heed, lest in attributing unto Scripture more than it can have, the incredibility of that do cause even those things which indeed it hath most abundantly to be less reverently esteemed.'[34]

II.

Before going on to formulate the principles of true interpretation it will be worth while to consider some of the sources of error. These may be arranged under six heads.

(1) *Ignorance.*

Many instances of erroneous exegesis arose from an imperfect knowledge of the original languages of the Scriptures, especially of the Hebrew of the Old Testament. One instance is the misunderstanding of the common idiom which strengthens

[33] Gairdner, *Lollardy and the Reformation* II, p. 244.
[34] *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity,* Bk. II, ch. viii, 7.

a statement by repeating the Infinite Absolute after the finite verb. An example is 'Let him die the death,' as it is rendered in English; this was taken to involve a double fate, in this world and the next.

Then there are mistakes which arise from psychological causes, such as the failure to recognize that a statement is metaphorical, from pressing the details of a parable, from isolating a text from its context, and in general from ignorance of the working of the Oriental mind. Many of the distressing theories of the Atonement which are still current in certain circles are due to such misunderstanding. If those who asked to whom was the ransom of our Lord's life paid had stopped to consider how much Jehovah received when He sold His people into the hands of their enemies, they might have seen the foolishness of taking figurative language too literally.[35]

(2) *Failure to use the Original.*

Other errors may come from the use of a defective text, and above all from the use of Versions. This last is so fruitful a source of error that examples must be cited. In *Ps.* xcii, 12, 'the righteous shall flourish as a palm-tree,' the last word is rendered φοῖνιξ by LXX. This was taken to be a reference to the fabulous phoenix, described by Herodotus and others, and so as a prophecy both of the Virgin-birth and the Resurrection of the Christ. Again, in *Is.* xi, 1, 'There shall come a rod out of Jesse,' 'rod' is rendered *virga* by the Vulgate, and this was easily confused with *virgo*, and the passage applied to the Blessed Virgin.

(3) *Prejudice.*

This can be seen at work in the efforts of Philo to reconcile Moses and Plato, the Hebrew Scriptures and Greek Philosophy; and again, a few generations later, in Josephus' attempt to depict the History of the Jews in a manner most likely to appeal to the Gentile world. Both involved themselves in quaint exegesis in carrying out their purpose. Akin to their attempts was the effort to find in certain books of the Old Testament things which were never there. The books of *Esther* and the *Song of Songs* are examples. These are not religious works at all — in

[35] See further Kennett, *In Our Tongues*, pp. 29*ff*, and *The Church of Israel*, pp. 143*f*.

neither of them is there even a mention of the name of God — but respectively a propagandist novel and an erotic poem.[36]

In a similar manner indecencies and moral difficulties were removed by the use of allegory. Origen, who held that such incidents were 'no narrative of facts but an introduction to mysteries,' asks the pertinent question: 'What good do we gain when we read that Abraham, the great patriarch, not only deceived Abimelech, but also betrayed the chastity of his wife? . . . Let the Jews hold this view and all who in their company are the champions of the letter and not of the spirit.'

Prejudice is seen again as the source of mistaken exegesis in doctrinal disputes and religious controversy. The combatants go to Scripture, not to find out what it actually says, but to prove their own notions. The Church of Rome definitely forbids any interpretation which can be shown to be contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers,[37] and from early times Scripture was controlled by tradition.[38] In the Reformation period even so advanced a scholar as Erasmus, in his controversy with Luther on the question of Free-will, expressly declared that his exposition of Scripture was subject to the judgment of the Church.

Protestants were equally bound by tradition, or the 'analogy of faith,' as they called it. Those who remember Archdeacon Hunkin's paper at the Conference in 1932 will recall his insistence on the Reformers having gone to the Scripture to find *what was really there*.[39] Unfortunately this spirit did not long persist, and Mark Pattison's cynical gibe, written some eighty years ago, had much truth behind it. 'The Roman theologian,' he wrote, 'smiles to see the self-complacence with which the Protestant divine first assumes as his basis Scripture interpreted by Reason, . . . and then proceeds to make Scripture yield up . . . precisely the confessions of the sixteenth century, and no more.'[40]

[36] No Jew was supposed to read the latter until he was thirty, and its literal interpretation was strictly forbidden (*Sanhedrin* III, 1). Theodore of Mopsuestia rejected it as a mere epithalamium; see Chase, *Chrysostom*, p. 19.

[37] As a matter of fact there is no such 'unanimous consent,' for the Fathers differed among themselves.

[38] *Cf.* Tertullian, *De Praescr.* IV, and Augustine, *De Doctr. Christ.* III, 10; 'Scriptura non asserit nisi fidem catholicam.'

[39] See *The Modern Churchman*, XXII, pp. 284 *ff.*

[40] 'The Present State of Theology in Germany,' in *Essays* II, p. 154.

Even a translation can show dogmatic bias, and Jewish scholars have objected to the tendentious chapter-headings of the Authorised Version, and such offences as printing 'son' in *Ps.* ii, 7, with a capital letter.

(4) *The use of Allegory.*

One of the most fruitful causes was the perverse ingenuity to which the use of allegory quite naturally led. This use was invited by the mention of apparently quite trivial details, such as the number of Abraham's servants (*Gen.* xvii, 23, 27),[41] or of the fishes in *John* xxi. These obviously had some inner significance in a narrative which was held to be verbally inspired.

The New Testament itself had shown the way in the use of the method; see, for example, *Matt.* i, 22*f*; ii, 15, 17*f*; *Gal.* iv, 21 *ff*; and St. Paul's commendation in *Gal.* iv, 4. It was further justified by the misapplication of II *Cor.* iii, 6, 'The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life'—a statement which originally concerned ethics was thus extended to cover exegesis. It should be remembered that the application of the same method enables Muslim scholars to find prophecies of the coming of Muhammed in the Old Testament. To cite an example may be interesting. In *Is.* xxi, 6*f*, the watchman is bidden to hearken diligently when he sees 'a troop of asses and a troop of camels.' Al-Berunī (*c.* 1000 A.D.) rendered the Hebrew, as is permissible, 'a rider on an ass, a rider on a camel.' He then referred the former to our Lord and the latter to Muhammed.[42]

The fact that Hebrew and Greek letters are also used as numerals gave immense scope to ingenious commentators; and those who still speculate on the Number of the Beast in *Rev.* xiii, 18, stand in a long succession. Such speculators are not, as a rule, hampered by the possession of much knowledge. You may like to be reminded, in this connexion, of Macaulay's encounter with an Englishman in India, who by writing Napoleon Buonaparte in Arabic, 'leaving out only two letters,' got the number 666. This was too much for the historian, and what follows must be given in his own words: '"And pray, sir, what

[41] This was made the basis of an elaborate comment by the writer of the *Epistle of Barnabas*: see ix, 7 *ff* (ed. Lake, p. 372).

[42] Quoted with other examples by D. B. Macdonald, *Aspects of Islam*, p. 236.

right have you to leave out two letters? And, as St. John was writing Greek to Greeks, is it not likely he would use the Greek rather than the Arabic notation?" "But, sir," said this learned divine, "everybody knows that the Greek letters were never used to mark numbers." I answered with the meekest look and voice possible: "I do not think that everybody knows that. Indeed I have reason to believe that a different opinion — erroneous, no doubt — is universally embraced by the small minority who happen to know any Greek." So ended the controversy. The man looked at me as if he thought me a very wicked fellow; and, I dare say, has by this time discovered that, if you write my name in Tamul, leaving out T in Thomas, B in Babington, and M in Macaulay, it will give the number of this unfortunate Beast.'[43]

(5) *Individual Eccentricity.*

Errors of this class arise usually in sermons. Preachers so often take it for granted, even in these enlightened times, that the desire to edify covers a multitude of crimes of misinterpretation, and having selected a text, they treat it as a kind of peg upon which to hang a large variety of miscellaneous and unrelated objects. Its fate is often that of the nail in *Is.* xxii, 24*f*: it collapses under the weight. The most eccentric example that I know is the case of a certain Radulphus who lived at the end of the thirteenth century. He got it into his head that *nemo* (no man) was no mere negation, but referred to a person of this name. Eventually he proved that he was the second person of the Blessed Trinity. His own stock of knowledge (as may well be imagined) was small, but he had a collection of passages made from which he composed a 'Sermon on Nemo.' The sermon, after noticing a number of Old Testament references to 'Noman,' then proceeds: 'Afterwards his authority grew deservedly so great that, as though scorning earthly things, he soared with marvellous flight to the highest heaven, as it is written, "Noman hath ascended into heaven."' And so on through 'Noman hath seen God,' 'Noman knoweth the Son,' and other similar texts. This is an actual sermon, and not a hoax of a similar nature to the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum* of the

[43] G. O. Trevelyan, *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* I, p. 370.

Renaissance period.[44] Strangely enough I happened to come across an exact parallel in Hindu religion. Certain of the hymns of the Rig-veda contain phrases such as 'Who is the greatest of the gods?' 'Who shall first be praised by our songs?' Some early interpreters saw in the interrogative pronoun 'Who' a divine name, and so sacrifices were offered to him, and special 'Whoish' hymns compiled and sung.[45]

(6) *The Desire to find everything in the Bible.*

There is a Rabbinic saying, 'Turn the law again and again, for everything is in it.'[46] This advice was frequently carried out, and new ideas and customs received their justification from passages of the Scriptures. But to bring these novelties within the shelter of the ancestral faith the letter had to be twisted and tortured. The same practice has been followed by Christian scholars in their endeavours to find doctrines, such as the Trinity and the Immortality of the Soul, in the Law and the Prophets. We are all fond of our own ideas and like, on the one hand, to feel that they have texts to support them; on the other, that they do not run contrary to definite Scriptural pronouncements. In the latter case we do our best to bring them to agreement, though we may not go so far as the earnest teetotaler who stoutly maintained that the wine recommended to Timothy 'for his stomach's sake' was for outward application only.

I have spent some time over these different sources of error because mistaken exegesis has a habit of persisting. Like other forms of error it has astonishing vitality, and once on its way defies all the efforts of correction to overtake it.

Sometimes such mistakes are quite harmless. You may remember Dante's vision of a lady, *giovane e bella*, gathering flowers on the banks of Lethe, who told him that she was Leah, and that her delight was in activity, as that of her sister, Rachel, was in meditation.[47] This distinction, which goes back at least as far as Philo,[48] depends on a fanciful derivation of the name Rachel.[49] Unfortunately eccentric efforts at elucidating the

[44] See Coulton, *From St. Francis to Dante*, pp. 407 *ff.*
[45] See Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop* I, p. 76.
[46] *Aboth*, v. 22, quoted by Farrar, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
[47] *Purgatorio*, XXVII, 96 *ff.* [48] *De Cong. Erud. Grat.* VI.
[49] Rachel (רָחֵל) is taken to represent רָאֹה חֹל: ὅρασις βεβηλώσεως.

sacred text were not all so innocent as this, and Farrar considered that, 'The misinterpretations of Scripture' were 'among the greatest calamities of Christendom.'[50] Such exegesis has often robbed Scripture of its rightful place, and made the Word of God of none effect.[51] When the voice of the Rabbi was held to be the voice of God,[52] the interpretation was on the way to become superior to the text. In the Middle Ages those who indulged in allegory came to despise the literal sense. 'Better to read Virgil,' said one, 'or the Story of Prometheus,' said another. Moreover, this method was an opening through which any number of false ideas could enter, since the text could be perverted to entertain them.[53]

But the dangers arising from false exegesis are not theological only; they extend their influence into the practical sphere as well. A long list of crimes could be compiled, due to a literal following of the Old Testament and a forgetfulness of the New —massacres, assassinations, persecution and slavery are among them—whilst the low standard of Luther in sexual matters was due to the same cause.[54]

III.

Having made our survey of the different periods and systems of Biblical Interpretation, and exposed erroneous methods, we are now in a position to formulate principles of right Interpretation. These I would state under six headings: (1) Use of the Original Text; (2) The Literal or Historical Sense must be primary; (3) Regard must be had to the Methods of Thought of the Times; (4) The Recognition of Progressive Revelation; (5) Principles may be Stated for Application to altered Circumstances; (6) Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. On each of these rules a few comments may be helpful.

(1) *The Use of the Original Text.*

We have already had examples of the errors which may arise from mistakes in translation. But it is not always recog-

[50] *Op. cit.*, p. 39.
[51] *Cf. Matt.* xv, 3, 6, 9.
[52] *Erubin* XXI.
[53] Cicero had complained that the Stoics, by their allegories, had turned Homer and Hesiod themselves into Stoics: see *De Nat. Deorum* I, xv.
[54] See Binns, *Decline and Fall of the Medieval Papacy*, p. 352.

nized that even a correct version may be misleading, since it tends to narrow the sense of the original, and, especially when rendering a primitive language such as Hebrew, to make its terminology too definite.[55] Our rule, however, demands more than the avoidance of versions; it demands a knowledge of the language—Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek—in the stage of development which it had reached when it was employed by the inspired writers. Until comparatively recent times the Greek of the New Testament, through ignorance of the existence of the κοινή, was forced into classical moulds; even our great Cambridge divines, Lightfoot and Westcott, were guilty of this attempt. The latter, indeed, seems never to have recovered from teaching Greek prose for some sixteen years to Harrow boys; otherwise, as Moulton once wrote, he could hardly 'have been so insistent on pursuing the ghost of the purposive force of ἵνα throughout the Fourth Gospel.'[56] This last usage, if strictly applied, would give some absurd results; for example, we should have to render *John* viii, 56 as 'our father Abraham rejoiced in order to see my day.'

(2) *The Literal or Historical Sense must be Primary.*

This involves not merely a strict regard to context, but also an attempt to fix the circumstances of each several passage. This is at times an exceedingly difficult task. In particular, the question of an individual or a national application of certain passages often presents an almost insoluble problem. The Servant Passages of *Isaiah*, and some of the Psalms, are obvious examples of this difficulty.[57]

(3) *Regard must be had to the Methods of Thought of the Times.*

For a Western scholar of the nineteenth or twentieth century to enter into the mind of Orientals who lived thousands of years ago requires a combination of sympathy and knowledge which is rarely achieved. Dr. Schechter once said that much German 'Higher Criticism' was simply 'Higher Anti-Semitism.'[58]

[55] See Kennett, *In Our Tongues*, pp. 4*f.*, 41.

[56] In *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, p. 499.

[57] See the appropriate commentaries, and also W. E. Barnes, 'The Interpretation of the Psalms' in *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, pp. 139*ff.*

[58] Quoted in *The People and the Book*, p. 406.

But this difficulty arises not only in the Old Testament, but in the New as well. Many passages in the latter have undoubtedly been misunderstood because scholars of classical training and Western outlook have failed to fathom the Hebrew mind.[59]

(4) *Progressive Revelation must be Recognized.*

The observance of this principle will do much to prevent our being led astray by St. Augustine's epigram to the effect that the New Testament lies concealed in the Old and the Old is made plain in the New,[60] a saying which has been responsible for much misleading exegesis.

(5) *Principles may be Stated for Application to altered Circumstances.*

The task of the interpreter, as St. Augustine recognized long ago,[61] is double; he must not only discover the meaning of the original writer, he must also endeavour to convey it to his own contemporaries. This means, often enough, the enunciation of principles to be applied to new circumstances. The Bible was written in an age when Natural Laws, for example, were unknown; it can therefore give but little help, on the intellectual plane, to those faced by modern difficulties. But, correctly used and interpreted, it can do something much greater: it can lift them to a higher plane where such difficulties cease to have any importance. This brings me to my last rule.

(6) *Spiritual Things must be Spiritually Discerned.*

The Bible is not a corpse, awaiting the skilled hand of the dissector, but a living book; and unless we have caught something of its secret all our attempts at interpretation will fall short of the mark. We may smile at the mistakes and absurdities of past generations of commentators; but if we are truly

[59] This has been well brought out by Kennett in *In Our Tongues* and *The Church of Israel*, pp. 139*ff*. No commentator on the New Testament, unless he is himself a first-rate Hebrew scholar, can afford to ignore these essays.

[60] *Quaest.* 73 *in Exod.* 'Quamquam et in vetere (testamento) novum lateat, et in novo vetus pateat.'

[61] *De Doctr. Christ.* I, i: 'Duae res quibus nititur omnis tractatio scripturae, modus inveniendi quae intelligenda sunt, et modus proferendi quae intellecta sunt.'

wise we shall envy them their insight into the things of God. Their methods, we believe, were wrong, and in some cases led to harmful results; but they had a true instinct. 'Inspiration,' wrote Westcott in his earliest published work, 'is partly the insight of holiness and partly its divine reward.' Those who attempt to interpret the inspired writings must also have the insight of holiness, and they too will not fail to receive the divine reward.

THE RELIGIOUS VALUE OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM

By Professor F. C. Burkitt, D.D., F.B.A.

THE title of this Lecture was suggested, indeed prescribed, to me by Dr. Major, speaking for his Committee. I recognize that it is a really important subject, but it is partly a truism about which there is little to be said, and partly something difficult and controversial. In some respects Biblical Criticism may be regarded as a dangerous solvent of cherished religious beliefs, indeed I rather think that is a side of my subject which I am bound seriously to consider.

What is Religion, and what is '*Religious* Value'? I take it that Religion is primarily concerned with our attitude to the Universe, including the history of Man and his alleged communications with the Powers that animate it, and for us particularly with our attitude to the alleged Revelation enshrined and recorded in the Bible. Has the serious study and criticism of the Bible any 'religious value'? I think the first and most obvious answer is that Religion, to have any value at all, must be true, or at least believed to be true, and that a 'religious belief' (that is to say, a belief about religion), which is known to be false, has no value at all.

I want to make the distinction between 'true' and 'believed to be true' quite clear, before I go on to other things. What is truth? Do we *know* anything at all? The Indians like to tell us that all our empirical knowledge is *Maya*, illusion. I do not think this philosophy — and much loose Western thinking also, which says, gaily and lazily, that all history is uncertain — considers degrees of knowledge, relative freedom from illusion, relative escape from error, of which human knowledge may be said to be made up. A drunken man looks up to the sky and says, 'Th-there are two moons, I s-see them.' Surely his companion, who is sober, has an absolutely more accurate knowledge of the heavenly bodies, when he replies 'No, there is only one!' And we may go one step further. The drunken man may be an astronomer, and he may know that all that has happened is that

he has had too good a dinner and cannot focus his eyes : he may be persuaded to believe that there is only one moon, though he sees two : that is also knowledge, true knowledge, so far as it goes. Or again, there is another example, the well-known story of William Herschel as a little schoolboy, who, when his schoolfellows declared that they saw the moon travelling rapidly against the wind through the clouds, made them look at the moon and clouds through the branches of a tree. The tree was fixed, the moon remained in the same place behind the waving branches; it was only the clouds that moved.

This last example is a simple and instructive case of scientific criticism and of the knowledge that comes of it. So far as it goes it is decisive. It had done those boys perhaps no harm to think that the moon was riding through the clouds, like a close-hauled sailing ship going against the wind. But when they had once seen and understood Herschel's demonstration they knew better, and to continue to believe that the moon was moving in the way they had supposed was to cherish a lie. As I said, they now knew better. Further, had they continued to watch, they would have discovered something more. The moon was moving, slowly, after all : It was moving in the direction of the hour-hand of a clock, but only half as fast. Indeed, further investigation would have shown that its motion was even slower : it drops back every day about one-fifteenth of the circle of the sky.

Astronomers have now still more wonderful and paradoxical things to tell us, but the things I have set forth are all contrary to our first impressions, and they are all true. The progression from the simple animism of Herschel's small schoolfellows to the point I reached is a real progression in true knowledge, an advance in understanding the true nature of things. Biblical Criticism is something like this. It gives us a clearer notion of what the Bible really is.

Perhaps, you may say, the Biblical Critic is rather to be compared with the Sculptor than the Modeller or Painter. He cuts away, rather than constructs. May he not sometimes cut too deep? The answer is that the analogy is not perfect. The Sculptor who chips away too much marble cannot really replace it. But the Critic who declares such-and-such a word or passage to be an interpolation, and then he (or another Critic) discovers

it to be genuine, has done no harm to the Bible, but only to his own reputation. After all, the Critic is not making truth, he is only discovering it. His work is rather 'the removing of things that may be shaken that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.' It is surely only those things which cannot be shaken which are of permanent religious value.

The past hundred years have seen a most momentous critical investigation of the Bible and of the religion of which it is an embodiment. I must remind you that the traditional view of the Bible is no creation of yesterday. The theory of the place of man in this world and his destiny is older than 'Line upon Line,' older than the Reformation and the revolt against Rome in the sixteenth century. It underlies all mediaeval theology, and is presented to us, full-grown and unmistakeable, in the *Epideixis* of St Irenaeus. This long-lost work was rediscovered in an Armenian translation in 1904, and published under Harnack's auspices in 1907. A better translation into English was made a little later by the late Dr. Armitage Robinson.

Why has this ancient and important work attracted so little attention? Its genuineness is undisputed; the Armenian version is a faithful representation of the original Greek, and for those who do not read Armenian there is a fair translation into German and a quite admirable one into English. The answer is, that it sounded like an old sermon, perhaps excogitated after a reading of *Paradise Lost*.

What has caused this change of view? On what is the change based? Why do we nowadays never hear sermons which have what used to be called 'the Plan of Salvation' as their principal subject? Before we go on to consider the religious value of Biblical Criticism we must, I think, say something about it as a solvent of the old view of the Bible, the view represented by 'Line upon Line'—and the *Epideixis*.

It is not only Biblical Criticism, in the strict sense, that we must consider. A few words must be given to Astronomy, to Geology, to Archaeology and the criticism of ancient documents in general, which took its rise in the eighteenth century.

Astronomy struck the decisive blow. Galileo's exacted recantation, with his alleged muttering of *Eppur si muove* afterwards, is a deservedly remembered symbol of the fight. Luther

and Calvin and their popish adversaries had all been disputing together on this earth, which they thought of as the centre of the universe. Then (as someone said) 'the heavens rolled away, and discovered infinite space.' Modern astronomers differ as to whether the visible universe is infinite or only very large: what has perished is the Biblical presentation of the earth as central. It was no longer logically possible to regard the tale told in *Genesis* as literally true.

Men are not swayed quickly by logic. The heavens are a long way off, and the implications of Copernican astronomy took a couple of hundred years to penetrate into the consciousness of Christian Europe. Geology came nearer home, and you can read in the article by C. W. Goodwin (in *Essays and Reviews*) of the desperate attempts made to reconcile *Genesis* with geological conclusions. In the end Science was left in undisputed possession. There is now no conflict between Religion and Science: we hear that proclaimed in sermons. It is not so often added that this is because Religion has abandoned all the points at issue, once so fiercely contested.

A third devolopment, which though it began as a sort of branch of Biblical Criticism has now an independent course, is the influence of Archaeology and Prehistory. A hundred years ago what did we know about human history before the time of Moses — say, before 1200 B.C., the exact date does not matter? A few tales told by Herodotus, now beginning to be reinforced by the new study of some of the Egyptian hieroglyphics — this, and the Book of Genesis. It was almost without a serious rival. Now there is a great series of Assyrian and Babylonian annals, Egyptian history from before the age of the Great Pyramid has been brought to an intelligible system, and we have come to know something of the empire of the Hittites. More than this, the ancient pottery found at Susa has points of contact on the one hand with the earliest days of Babylonian-Sumerian civilization, on the other with the Neolithic peoples of Northern Europe. 'Neolithic,' 'Palaeolithic' — these words were not invented a hundred years ago! But now we know, know for certain, that about 15,000 B.C. man drew on the walls of the caves that he frequented pictures of the animals he ate, pictures some of them so beautifully coloured and modelled that most of my

audience would despair of doing them so well. In other words, these were men, not anthropoid apes. And further back there is indubitable evidence of man-made tools, intelligently chipped, 30,000 and more years old, beside which the tale of Adam and Eve rings like a modern parable, like one of the stories in 'Agathos'!

The tale of Man, as unfolded by Archaeology, is quite different from the early Biblical stories. The Biblical stories enshrine no memory of primitive days, only imaginative guesswork. We may approve the moral of the first eleven chapters of *Genesis*, but we can no longer learn history from them, still less explain the present facts of human life by them, as did St. Paul and St. Augustine. And without the theory of the Fall, deduced by Paul and affirmed by Irenaeus and Augustine, where is the imposing fabric of historical Christian theology? What have we got to put in its place?

In all this we have not arrived at Biblical Criticism proper. What we have been considering is the masterful way in which the modern knowledge has demonstrated the inaccurate and unscientific character of just that portion of the Old Testament which ancient study of the Bible considered to be of fundamental importance.

Biblical Criticism, the study of the Bible under modern presuppositions, may be said to be animated by two main principles: (1) the Historical Point of view, and (2) an Evolutionary philosophy. Let us take the second point first, beginning by some definition of the term 'Evolution.' It is now in everyone's mouth, but it should be remembered that its meaning is now rather different from what it was in the eighteenth century. The question was explained by Driesch (*Gifford Lectures*, 1907) and the theological application made with the utmost clearness by George Tyrrell in *Christianity at the Cross-roads*, p. 18, note. But as that passage is mostly overlooked by writers who speak of 'the evolution of religion' or 'development in Church doctrine,' I will venture to expound it afresh.

Evolution used to mean the difference between a cloak that is folded up and the same cloak spread out. We may even allow for a little growth in size and consistency, I suppose, in living tissue, as in the unrolled frond of a fern. But essentially, according to this school of 'evolutionists,' the whole oak exists

in the acorn, each particular oak in the particular acorn out of which it grew. 'Epigenesis,' on the other hand, means that in the acorn there are only the two seed-leaves and a bud, the bud which has in itself the mysterious faculty of growth. It can only grow into an oak, but nothing more is there, even in germ: this branch and that branch of the full-grown tree are not yet in existence at all.

In the eighteenth century the battle of the acorn, of the egg, was fought out and the supporters of epigenesis were victorious. The embryo has a possibility of growth, he may be precocious or stunted, he may become orthodox or a heretic, an Athanasian or an Arian, but as an embryo he is not yet either. It is not yet implicit in his substance. The problem of Darwinian evolution is somewhat different. That concerned the origin of new species, of new and different acorns (so to speak), which would produce new and different oak-trees. A very large and controversial part of that discussion turned on the machinery by which such different 'acorns' were produced, and that discussion is still undecided. But that from time to time significant variations, however produced, do occur is probable, and therefore it is unnecessary to bring in a theory of special creation or formation for every species. We may be lineally descended from something more like monkeys or pigs or crocodiles without the value of the human qualities we now possess being less real or less valuable.

In any case the old meaning of 'evolution' is inadequate as a description of the nature of organic life, and the organic life of religion is no exception. We are no longer compelled to search for an image of the Christian religion in the Hexaemeron, in the story of Adam and Eve, in the circumstances of the Fall. In fact, I would claim that the Christian theory is essentially evolutionary, that it fits better with an evolutionary philosophy than with that current in the centuries during which it grew up. Judaism, admirable as it is in many ways, is not evolutionary in the modern sense. The mind of God, according to Jewish theory, is expressed once for all in the Law. That Law is eternal and immutable. All truth is hidden in it: 'there is nothing new under the sun.' The Christian theory is different. The Christian will tell you that the Law is 'holy and just and good.' It did once express the Will of God: the Will of God was once written down and codified — in the *Old* Testament. But now a

new development has taken place. It is expressed in what we call the *New* Testament. We do not reject the Old Testament: it is necessary still, necessary to explain how things came to be as they were when the new state of things came about. But we put the New Testament side by side with the Old, and there are some things in the New Testament which are not in the Old, and which embolden us to say that parts of the Old are now antiquated and of no more authority.

Surely this is an Evolutionary theory. Yet it is something to which the Fundamentalist and the Modernist, the traditionalist and the critic will all subscribe. We can now go back to our other main principle, the Historical point of view. The Bible is not so much the formula of truth as the record of the long process by which the Gospel was prepared, and a historical explanation of the form which the Gospel took. Without the Bible, without the Old Testament, the figure of Jesus Christ would be unintelligible.

We shall meet with disappointment, if we do not remember that in the modern world, and particularly among English people, an Historical point of view is unpopular and unattractive. Our countrymen feel in their hearts that an historical point of view is unpractical. They want the truth here and now, expressed in a matter sufficiently like that of a modern book or newspaper to be to them intelligible and interesting. From the moment when the old view of the infallibility of Scripture began to be given up, the decay of Scripture reading among the English people began.

Our business to-day is not the advantages of a popular use of the Bible, but its absolute, theoretic value. If this can be maintained, appropriate popular use will follow. What, then, has Biblical criticism done for the Bible? Granted that the old account of the relation man stands in to God has broken down, what account has criticism to give? What I have been saying is meant to remind you that a critical study of the Bible is called for, whether those who desire to use it like or no. What I want now to indicate is something of the position this critical study has actually reached.

First of all, a great deal of Biblical criticism has little to do with Religion. As long as the belief in Biblical infallibility held, as long as the Bible itself was regarded as the divine

revelation, rather than a sort of history of the process of divine revelation with illustrative documents, all study of every part of the Bible was a study of Religion, and even negative results (such as came from Geology) had a sort of 'religious' value. But now the Churches have more or less acknowledged that the early chapters of *Genesis* have no scientific authority, being merely ancient traditions and folk-tales of a small Semitic nation, interesting not for what that nation then was and knew, but because it had a remarkable future before it. To the religious inquirer it matters very little whether Jericho was captured by the Israelites in 1200 B.C. or 1600 B.C., whether the fairy-tale of its capture in the Bible refers to its having been previously sacked or to some conflagration. The question we must ask is, what religious interest survives? What does the Old Testament, which at the moment we are chiefly considering, still teach us?

My own feeling is that the value of the Old Testament resides in the picture it gives of the History of Israel, internal and external, at various stages — a Moving-Picture, or rather a 'Talkie,' if I may use the term. We see in it not just a description of the old religion of the Jews, but rather that religion in the making. It is Biblical Criticism that has arranged the scenes in their real order, and fitted the words of the Prophets to them. That *is* its 'religious value.'

It is an advantage to know that Joshua commanding the sun to stand still is a poetic hyperbole, not a mistaken pseudo-scientific statement. It is an advantage that the story of Jael and that of Saul's slaughter of the Amalekites may be regarded as typical of Israelite beginnings, not of that into which they were destined to develop. But at the most these are negative boons. It is when we compare the Old Testament with other early religious literature that we become conscious of the debt that we still owe to it.

The two civilizations about which I am particularly thinking are the Greco-Roman and the Indian. The official religion of the Greco-Roman world had had a great past, but it had come to be quite disconnected with conduct. Conduct, public and private, was a subject of great concern to the classical world, but it had ceased to be vitally connected with the immemorial sanctions of Religion and had become a department of Philo-

sophy. Philosophy—by which I mean the great movement which issued from Socrates—laid no claim to revelation or inculcated gnosis. There was Wisdom, ready-made in everyone's heart; Socrates, the lover of Wisdom, the Philo-sopher, was merely the Midwife, skilful to remove obstructions which hindered the Wisdom from coming out into the open. It did not need a Gnosis, it did not need an august Tradition, to guide a man to right conduct. As a result, traditional Religion was moribund.

Indian Religion is living yet, but it tends to kill everything it touches. All is One, and One is All: everything else is Illusion. It is a dreary creed. Perhaps the fundamental fact to which it bears witness is that India is too hot, all the year round. Some races of Indians came from elsewhere, some Indians are too human to be seriously influenced by religious philosophy, no human beings are altogether consistent! But in so far as Indian religious philosophy has influence, it persuades the Indian that human effort is altogether futile, that a seeming advantage or disadvantage in one life is corrected in the next, and so on indefinitely, till the soul lives a really perfect life which is without any effect at all, good or bad. A result of this view of life is that there is no native Indian history. We English in India are beginning to sort out the tangled skein of Indian happenings, because with our philosophy (founded ultimately on the Bible) we believe it has significance. But that is a Western, Christian, way of looking at things.

I pass to the New Testament with a further observation about Hindoos and Indian Religion. Biblical Criticism tends to show that whatever merits and excellencies the Fourth Gospel may possess, historical accuracy is its weakest side. It is surely significant that it is the Fourth Gospel which most appeals to the Indian temperament, and that missionaries also tell us that the Old Testament does not appeal to them. It seems to them foreign, contingent, and provincial: they would like a selection from the Vedas and the Bhagawad-Gita in its place.

It is somewhat difficult for me to speak to you about the Religious Value of Criticism for the New Testament. There is no time to set before you all the varied conclusions of competent critics or to assess the value of their conclusions. I can only give

you a short individual view. I seem to see the Christian cause fighting on two fronts: I will not exactly call them the critical and the religious fronts, because the names of the two fronts vary. The double struggle is not exactly a misfortune for the Christian, for, as I understand the matter, it is natural for Christianity to have a double aim. Jesus Christ, God and man, is essential to it. It is an universal religion, but its Hero was born a Jew and sacrificed His life to bring in the Jewish ideal of the Kingdom. The greater part of what I have been saying has been to stress the value of the Old Testament as setting before us the Religion of the countrymen of Jesus, to explain the ideas common both to Him and those to whom He talked: and yet the Christian movement is of the nature of new wine in old bottles, now decanted into the Catholic Church with the old wine-skin of Judaism abandoned. Then again the New Testament contains the dogmatism of St Paul and the ethics of the Synoptic Gospels: are they both essential? There is the eschatological Hope on the one hand, and the 'aeonian life' of the Johannine theology on the other: which idea is really Christian?

It is the task of Critical Study to appraise these contrasted ideas. It is only when criticism has duly sorted out the documents that we are able duly to appreciate the contrasted ideas they represent. Some years ago there was a discussion in the *Hibbert Journal* called 'Jesus or Christ,' and someone or other said that the essence of Christian Religion was neither 'Jesus' nor 'Christ,' but the hyphen that joined the two words together. I rather think that Biblical Criticism is of the nature of that hyphen! There is something to be said for this view. We read the earliest surviving Christian documents, the Epistles of St Paul. The Catholic Epistles and the speeches in *Acts* are somewhat similar, and something rather of the same nature can be extracted from the work of the Apostolic Fathers. If we take these documents and extract from them the Figure of Jesus Christ we hear of the Son of God, the First-born of all creation, Who came down to earth and was born of a woman under the Jewish Law, a descendant of David, subject to human conditions and pleasing not Himself, Who was crucified for us and rose again and appeared alive to Peter and the disciples, and even to Paul himself, and now is sitting at the right hand of

God, and will soon, very soon, appear again in glory to judge all men, living and dead. It is recognizably the Jesus Christ depicted in the Creed.

That is one picture. Then there is quite another. We read in Mark of the Prophet from Nazareth, who comes and announces that the Kingdom is now at hand. The earth produces its seed, first the blade, then the ear, then the corn, but as soon as the corn is ripe the Husbandman — God — will put in the sickle and reap. Yet the months went by, and nothing happened. The Prophet retires, goes away out of the Holy Land. All the summer He is away in Gentile Tyre and Sidon, in the hills outside Galilee, and at last when north of Galilee, near the source of the Jordan, He tells His friends to follow Him to Jerusalem, to be killed, because that will somehow be a ransom for the Elect and will bring the Kingdom in. And then, at the end, after a demonstration in the Temple, the Prophet despairs. Jerusalem is cold, the End is not yet; it will come, but not at once. He has lost hope, but determines not to retire. The authorities think Him a danger, they arrest Him and hand Him over to the Roman Governor as a political rebel, and so He is executed. He dies, saying, 'My God, my God, why—?'

There are the two pictures. It is the task of Biblical Criticism to exhibit them both, and to reconcile them. The Gospels of Matthew and of Luke were a first attempt. The Gospel of John was a later and different attempt. Those were days when History impressed men differently from nowadays. The old Biographies of famous heroes used to enhance the Hero's achievement, the Hero's adversaries are blackened to make him the whiter. The mere faithful record of the actual course of events was felt to lack distinction. It is a new and marvellous fact that Mark's Tale was written, and it is something very like a miracle that it has survived, and survived as an official member of a quartette, not as a new discovery dug up by archaeologists. Its present position of pre-eminence is one of the great achievements of Biblical Criticism.

Surely a better historical view has 'religious value.' If the career of Jesus Christ be significant to modern Christians, then the work of Biblical Criticism has religious value. If it be sound and thorough it leads us back to Christ.

SCRIPTURES, CREEDS AND ARTICLES

By Professor Bethune-Baker, D.D., Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity, Cambridge.

SCRIPTURES, Creeds and Articles. This morning we are to consider the three members of this triad in relation to one another. More particularly, I suppose, the intention of the framers of the scheme of this Conference was that we should consider how our attitude to Creeds and Articles is affected by our changed conception of the Bible. Whatever we do, we do as practising members of the Church of England. Scriptures, Creeds and Articles are part of the heritage of which we are trustees. I do not regard it as a *damnosa hereditas* of which we should be well quit. It may seem absurd to say that of a triad which includes the New Testament; but I have in view, as you would wish me to have, the widespread feeling that Creeds and Articles have had their day—some would even call it an evil day —and that the time has come when they are only a hindrance to us in our age-long task of realizing for ourselves and commending to others the Christian view of life. And Scriptures, Creeds and Articles do hang so closely together—there is so real a *circumincessio* between them—that I think we must have one principle of dealing with them all alike. The fact is that, on the one hand, the Scriptures give us almost our only evidence as to the nature of the great experience of which Jesus was the centre —in which experience our Christian Religion was born—and of the earliest attempts at interpretation of it. They are a possession with which we can never part. But, on the other hand, for everything in our Creeds and Articles which we no longer believe, the Scriptures supply abundant justification. On all the points that trouble us it is a manner new to our own times in which we must esteem Scriptures, Creeds and Articles alike.

I have spoken of them as our heritage. They are our possessions. I believe a first step to the right attitude towards them is taken when we understand that simple fact. We possess them; we ought not to allow them to possess us. They are not an independent authority set over against the Church. They were

not imposed on the Church by any kind of higher power outside it. This is clearly true of Creeds and Articles which were all drawn up and composed by members of the Church, whose individual names are often known. They are the Church's own creation—the creation of people like ourselves, after much committee work and a good deal of what is known as 'lobbying.' They have no inherent authority; general acceptance at the time and use since—these are the credentials with which they come to us. They are high credentials, but they confer no kind of sacredness or finality. In my opinion, such statements were necessary expressions and safeguards of the genuine Christian revelation, and the best that could be produced at the times at which they were drawn up. I shall come back to this point. But first what I have said of Creeds and Articles is true also of the specifically Christian Scriptures. The New Testament is the creation of the Church of the second century. I think the realization of this is one of the chief results of modern investigation. We cannot make again the mistake that some of the Reformers made of setting up the Bible as an independent authority over against Tradition and an infallible guide to the content of the Christian revelation, as though it was something given to the Church from on high to control for ever its teaching and its practice — as though, indeed, the New Testament was the Christian revelation itself.

We know now that the books of the New Testament were writings of individual members of the Church that won their way on their own merits, of different kinds, with restricted circulation at first, in different localities, and that the decision as to which of such writings should be selected for general use in the Church was determined by public opinion, sometimes on mistaken grounds. We are in a much better position to-day to judge questions of authorship and date and historical trustworthiness than anyone was when the selection was made.

But the point I am concerned with now is that the choice of the books to which it would appeal in support of its teaching and its claims was the Church's own act. The doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture depends on this judgment of the Church of the middle and latter part of the second century. The living tradition of doctrine and custom was first in the field and re-

mained side by side with the holy writings. Never was Scripture given the first place. Tertullian, for example, shows himself at least sub-conscious of the actual facts when he declares that heretics have no right to use the Scriptures because they belong to the Church, and only the Church has the right to say what they mean. And in general practice that principle prevailed ever after. 'Learn first' (from the Church) 'what ought to be believed'—then go to the Scriptures for confirmation.

'Texts' isolated from their context, and sometimes given strained meanings, played a part in the framing of doctrine in the earlier ages in all schools of thought in the Church, quite as much among the heretics as among the orthodox: there was always appeal to Scripture in this way. And when non-scriptural terms like ὁμοούσιος were introduced into the Creed, it was claimed in defence of them that they were simply summary expressions of the sense of Scripture; and I do not see how any modern student of Scripture and of the course of the development of Doctrine can deny the justice of that claim. For we have always to remember that we have no straightforward contemporary account of the actual facts of the life and teaching of Jesus such as a scientific historian of to-day might have given us. Professor Burkitt has said what can be said for Mark in this respect.* But it is only a question of degree. Mark wrote to commend 'the gospel of Jesus Christ' as Son of God—whether those words belong to the autograph in his first verse or whether he waited to let us hear them from the centurion at the end. His gospel is intended to proclaim the faith of the early Church in Jesus in the sense which led to the later developments. It is interpretation or valuation at an early stage. I do not think that anyone here would be content to remain at that stage. I doubt if the world would ever have been won to the Marcan Jesus. I am sure He would not satisfy us to-day. And I must go further. I think we need to be very careful in any appeal that we make to what is called primitive Christianity. It was full of ideas that none of us share—ideas dependent on the science, the religious psychology, the political and economic situation of the time. The New Testament reflects them con-

*See his book, *Jesus Christ: An Historical Outline* (Blackie & Co., Glasgow).

stantly. It cannot be the Word of God to us as it has been to our forefathers in the past. It simply is not true that the Bible is the sole source of Christian knowledge.

On this point I welcome warmly a recent utterance of the Bishop of Birmingham. Though the report in the *Birmingham Post* as quoted in the *Guardian* (20 July, 1934) is rather confused, there cannot be any doubt as to the Bishop's meaning. He was speaking of the Declaration of Assent in which a clergyman states that he believes the doctrine of the Church of England as set forth in the Prayer Book and Articles to be agreeable to the Word of God. I was able to make that declaration nearly fifty years ago because I took the phrase 'the Word of God' to mean the Bible as we have it, and I had no doubt that the doctrine set forth in the Prayer Book and Articles could be amply justified from the Bible. I know of no result of modern scholarship that in any way alters the contents of the Bible so as to lessen its support to the doctrine of Prayer Book and Articles, and I could make the same declaration to-day.

But it is quite another matter when I take the Word of God in a larger sense — the sense in which I understand the Bishop would have us take it—as meaning 'the light of such knowledge as comes by the guidance of the Holy Spirit,' and including in such knowledge the understanding of the Bible that has been won by the work of the best scholarship of our time. Then I find much in the doctrine of the Prayer Book and Articles that is not agreeable to this Word of God, and I could not make the declaration as interpreted in this new way.

But then I recall what I am sure the Bishop had in mind, as will be obvious, of course, to everyone here. The Church of England, as reformed, while it upholds a large part of the pre-Reformation tradition, makes Scripture a test of the truth of its doctrine as a final court of appeal. It refers its ministers to Scripture. One of the undertakings it requires of all who are admitted to the priesthood is that they will 'be diligent . . . in reading of the Holy Scriptures and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same,' and 'out of the said Scriptures instruct the people' committed to their charge. No blame, therefore, can attach to them if they fashion their instruction on the lines suggested to them by such study.

On my own account I should wish to add that, while I do not wish to blame any of my fellow Churchmen, if fault is to be found at all, it would be with those of the clergy who are so occupied with the incessant serving of tables which our diocesan and parochial system seems to demand to-day that they are distracted from serious study of any kind. They therefore cannot tell the people committed to their charge what the new knowledge of the Bible is; they cannot guide them to discriminate what is of permanent worth in it from that which belongs merely to the special conditions of the world at the time at which the revelation occurred; they may even emphasize in their teaching just those things in the Bible which are most alien to the ordinary ways of thought and knowledge of our own time, thinking in that way to enhance the impressiveness of its message. So, in upholding the Bible as the Word of God in the old sense of the phrase, they oppose it to the new Word of God, the new revelation, which in no way detracts from the value of the Bible but helps us to the true construction of it for our own times.

It is obvious that we cannot use the Bible as a sufficient criterion of the doctrine that ought to be taught in the Church of England as the truth for this world of ours to-day. I recall a great saying:

> God may have other Words for other worlds,
> But for this world the Word of God is Christ.

Yet this world with which we have to deal to-day is so different from the world of the New Testament, and we know so very much more about God, and therefore about His Christ, than anyone then could know. See what a few of the bishops, who really knew, induced the last Lambeth Conference to say about the doctrine of God.

Theologically, of course, we distinguish the Father, the Son who is Christ, and the Holy Spirit, who is the spirit of Father and Son alike, one of whose special functions is to lead the way to all truth. But we also insist that all these Three are modes of the being and the activities of the One true God. And as our conception of God has grown with the new revelation of knowledge, so must our conception of the Christ who is the manifestation of God. We cannot keep an old Ptolemaic, static or catastrophic conception of Christ side by side with a new Copernican, dynamic, evolutionist conception of God.

But it is still the same God, the same Christ: *Idem aliter*: the same revealed anew in different ways to mankind in a new environment. And some of the writers of the New Testament, notably the Fourth Evangelist and the writer to the Ephesians, show us that they conceived of the Truth and the Christ in this dynamic, growing, expanding way, and might have been quite good evolutionists if they had lived to-day. I mean that to St. John what was manifested in the Logos made flesh was only what had been from the beginning, the formula of everything in the world, the life principle, the light of every man. What was new was the open or visible manifestation of this life and light (which is God) in a human life. It was a new stage or emergence in a continuous process. And he foresaw that many things remained still to be revealed. The writer to the Ephesians describes the Christ as growing to fulness through the experience and attainment of the Church that is His body. And the writer to the Hebrews in like manner understands the revelation in the Son as continuous with earlier revelations made in many bits and in many ways.

I think we 'Modernists' of to-day need to make our position as regards the traditional Creeds and our own special Prayer Book and Articles clearer than it is.

It is not true of most of us that we want to dispense with all formal statements of doctrine and encourage either what I must call the mental vagueness that characterizes much of what is deemed religious thought to-day, or the merely pragmatic spirit that says, 'These things are too high for us; we cannot understand them. Do not trouble yourself about their *rationale*. Just do the things that Christians have always done in the way of prayer and worship and sacraments—these are your religious duties, these are the divinely-appointed means of grace to help you on your way through life. Use them, and if you do not become exactly a saint you will have done your best.' Nor yet again do most of us think that the high call of Christian ethics can be effective without a Christian theology to sustain it.

The emotional appeal, the institutional appeal, the ethical appeal, all of which have their proper place in the Christian religion, are alike precarious unless they can be justified by a coherent rational conception of the meaning of life such as it is

the task of a scheme of doctrine to supply. It is, of course, by faith we are saved, by faith we live. But an account of that faith we must be able to give, in terms that can be understood. We need the metaphysician, the philosopher of religion, to help us in stating the Christian conception of man and the world and God. It is not that we do not want a Creed, but that we are not satisfied with the Creeds we have in use.

I will not weary you by reciting all the defects in them, which everyone knows, but I do desire to say in passing that I wish we could stop talking so much about the obsolete metaphysics in them. There is of course a good deal of this in our system of Doctrine, but not in the Creeds themselves that are chiefly in question. There is just one word in the 'Nicene' Creed, and if you take *οὐσία* as 'being,' and think of 'being' in terms of reason and purpose and will, as you do of yourself and others if you ever ask yourself 'What is my being?' it is a simple enough expression. The real objection on that score is that if you say *ὁμοούσιος τῷ πατρί*, you ought also to say *ὁμοούσιος ἡμῖν* in the same breath, as the Chalcedonian definition does. 'Incarnate' and 'made man' is not enough. The Creed is not fully orthodox. And of course it encourages a tritheistic conception. We ought to use with it the theological part of the *Quicunque vult*. But this is by the way.

I think the objection most deeply felt among us to our traditional Creeds and doctrines is what I have already indicated. We have outgrown them. Christianity has outgrown them. It can no longer be contained in them. It has never been static. The Johannine interpretation swallowed up the Marcan and Lucan. The orthodox Christians of the first stage became the Judaizing heretics of the next stage. The Catholic Church came into existence and grew by an epigenetic process. A definite stage was reached at Nicaea. Later ones can be traced all down. The Reformation stands out, of course, conspicuously. It was not lack of faith that caused it, but more faith. The Christian spirit had been confined in the mass of institutions that had grown up and the doctrines that had been invented to support and justify them, and it burst through them.

No doubt appeal was made to an early Church that had never existed as it was pictured before corruptions of faith and prac-

tice occurred, and to passages of Scripture in isolation from their real historical setting, and so not always rightly understood. There was very little knowledge of that early Church or its real beliefs, out of which, as we know now, the sacramental system of the mediaeval Church was a natural growth. It was an appeal against the inevitable development which the Christian religion had undergone. It was controlled by a static conception of faith and order. The same old doctrinal tests remained — the three Creeds and the first four Councils; even the one-fold theory remained as regards each particular nation or political unit. And yet we can see to-day that it was no revolutionary break with the past but an instance of genuine epigenetic evolution, at all events as we had it in England.

With us it was essentially a modernist movement in response to the new learning of the period that the Renaissance and the rediscovery of the Bible had spread. There was a new environment, and our English Reformation, typically conservative in comparison with the Swiss and German Reformations, was the reaction of the Church of England to its new environment.

The English people have characteristics of their own, and within the Church of England during its see-saw experiences in the Tudor-Stuart period of its history there was won an ordered freedom unknown elsewhere. It was a freedom from foreign ecclesiastical claims, from long-established conceptions of sacraments and other religious institutions, and — what we are most concerned with at the moment — freedom in the revision of doctrines as to what was and was not a necessary part of the faith of a Christian. The Church of England adapted itself to the new learning and the new ideas.

And now we have another new learning. I have no doubt that Dr. J. M. Wilson was right in claiming as a new revelation for religion the new knowledge that all the sciences about the world and its denizens have been gradually building up during the four centuries since our Articles of Religion were compiled, and especially in the last seventy years. And to that must be added the results of a hundred years of study of the history and literature of the beginning and later course of our religion — knowledge which has only been filtering through to the people during about the last thirty years.

That a new reformation of our scheme of Christian doctrine is needed to meet this new revelation of knowledge of the world and man's history in it is clear. If Christian doctrine is to remain it must be presented in new ways. On this point at least this Society of Modern Churchmen are of one mind. But I must go further.

The Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in an age before biological evolution was thought of, was really, I have suggested, an instance of true epigenesis, by accident as it seems. We must see to it that ours is consciously on evolutionary lines, starting from where we are now. We shall not appeal to any fanciful picture of a primitive uncorrupted Christianity; nor to the Holy Catholic Church in which we all believe, though we know it has never existed visibly anywhere on earth; nor to a supposed age of faith, nor even to 'the pure Word of God.' We abate no jot or tittle of the claims of Christianity to be a revelation of truth for these times of ours. We learn all we can from the past history of the Church, its successes and its failures. Among its successes I am sure we ought to reckon its early alliance with secular learning and its use of the *data* of the knowledge of later times in presenting its message. It is just that work that we need to carry forward. Among its failures we surely shall not put its attempts to secure a true expression, even in detail, of the grounds and content of its faith. It is not possible for anyone who takes his religion seriously and thinks at all not to want coherent answers to such questions as those with which our traditional system of doctrine deals.

It is quite another matter to set up such answers as divinely revealed and final truth, and to require acceptance of them as a condition of membership of the Church of Christ on earth and to dare, as they did of old, to extend that condition to heaven. And yet we are really acting in just the same spirit in the different circumstances of our own time when we demand as a condition of Christian fellowship in our Church the profession of the Christian faith in the exact terms of the past, and actually pick out the words 'came down from heaven' as a credal test of truth as truth is in Jesus. That Jesus came from God, was sent, that he who with the eye of faith has seen Him has seen the Father, we need to affirm in our Creed as strongly as ever.

When I get behind the actual terms of our Creeds to the religious ideas that underlie the beliefs I have abandoned, I find so much religious value in them that I would rather go on saying 'conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary . . . descended into Hell . . . come again to judge . . . resurrection of the flesh' than have nothing in my Creed that expressed my faith in the Incarnation, in the victory over sin and death achieved in Christ, in the sovereignty of His standards and ideals, in the things of this life, the flesh, the things done in the body, all experience here, as continuous with the life of the world to come. In saying this I think I am really for once just in the position of St. Augustine, who knew what bad words 'three persons' were to use of God but used them all the same just in order not to be reduced to silence. Some of us must express ourselves, however badly. I am no iconodule, but I must somehow have my icons.

It is not a residue of the old creeds that we want, just the bits we can save from the wreckage of their philosophy and science. We are forced to negation in some of those respects, but what we want is affirmation of the same faith in God and His Christ that they express. Really it is a larger, not a smaller, faith we want to affirm, one that grows out of them, which they have become too constricted to contain.

But the ideas 'born of the Virgin Mary,' 'came down from heaven,' mean nothing that is relevant to the thought of ordinary English men and women to-day. They have no power whatever to commend the Christian religion to them or to guide their thinking and living in a true direction. They do not in any way enhance the claims of our Lord on our world to-day. Even Dr. Emil Brunner, in commending his ultra-transcendental conception of Revelation, which I believe to be thoroughly pagan and unChristian, has no use for the birth from a Virgin.

We all, in the Church of England, use and reverently esteem episcopacy; but when our northern bishops at an awkward moment, when most of us were a little puzzled, can do nothing better than reassert these old beliefs, they bring our ancient formularies into fresh disrepute and show that they can no longer be regarded as expressing the Christian conception of God and man and the world for men and women to-day. The bishops have made it harder than ever for us to use them at all.

It has been suggested that we should use them as hymns of praise. But we have already so many bad hymns of praise. If we presume to praise those whom we honour among ourselves, we try to say the right things about them, and we do not say what we do not believe is true. We choose our words as nicely as we can to convey to others what we mean. And this is just what our Creeds do not do for us to-day.

I admire attempts to produce alternative Creeds — Dr. Major's and Miss Emmet's. I have even tried myself. But one of the great advantages of writing things down is that it shows you what will not do. Sometimes, of course, it has to do — like this paper of mine to-day. But not when it is a Creed for everyone to use.

We are members of a world-wide communion. Many of our fellow Churchmen do not feel our objections to the Creeds, but they might be persuaded to give us some relief as regards the use of them. In my boyhood people showed their disapproval of the *Quicunque vult* by sitting down when it was said. I have too much respect for our two other Creeds to treat them in that way, and I do not think that anyone's reaction to them can be quite as hostile as it was to the combination of clauses 'they that have done evil into everlasting fire. This is the Catholic Faith; which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved. Glory be to the Father,' and so on. And it was the Catholic Faith. And now by many oblique moves and devious ways the general disuse of the *Quicunque vult* has been brought about.

I think we must rely on some similar kind of passive resistance and peaceful persuasion, working together, to get our other Creeds and Articles out of such insistent, provocative, repellent use as we make of them at present, while keeping them still as old guide books of our Faith. At the moment the most urgent question seems to me to be the use of the Creed in Baptism. A declaration of faith in Jesus Christ as incarnate Son of God and of desire to be received into the Church, with the promises, would surely be sufficient.

But above all else we must depend on the spreading far and wide of the kind of interpretation of Christian doctrine that Modernists give, and of the knowledge of the freedom of thought and expression which is our heritage in the Church of England *salvo iure communionis*.

MIRACLE IN THE BIBLE

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FROM the earliest days Christianity has been associated with belief in miracles, and the importance of these miracles as evidence of God's action and of the truth of Christian teaching has throughout been a prominent theme in Christian apologetic. 'Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus the Nazarene, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in the midst of you as ye yourselves know, him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay, whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.'[1] Peter, as *Acts* represents him, proceeds at once to quote from Psalm xvi, which he interprets as a prophecy by David of the resurrection fulfilled amongst them. The appeal to prophecy holds a larger place in early Christian writing than the appeal to miracle. The prophecies could be read in the Scriptures, the authenticity of which was unquestioned, and many of the events in which those prophecies were held to have been fulfilled were uncontested. Miracles, on the other hand, might be disputed, and in any case they were less effective with those who heard tell of them but had not witnessed them with their own eyes.[2] Yet the appeal to prophecy was also an appeal to miracle; for prophecy was the power to foretell the future under the direct influence of divine inspiration, and it exceeded any purely natural gift. 'This is the work of God,' wrote Justin, 'to tell of a thing before it happens, and so to show it happening as it was foretold.'[3] With Jews, these arguments carried less weight than with others; they had other interpretations of the prophecies, and the miracles of the Old Testament at all events were their own possession. With Gentiles, they carried much greater weight; for the Jewish interpretations

[1] Acts ii, 22-24.
[2] Origen, *in Joan,* II, xxxiv.
[3] Justin, *1 Apol.* xii; *cf.* Origen, *c. Celsum* VI, x.

could usually be neglected, and Gentiles had no body of sacred writings comparable with those the Christians had inherited and now interpreted in their own sense. Miracles had not then quite the persuasive power they had in some later ages. There was a general disposition to believe in the marvellous, and other cults had their miracles, often well attested and recorded in writing.[4] Yet Christians could appeal to the outstanding marvellousness of their own, or to the purpose with which they were performed, as showing that they were no acts of common sorcerers or magicians, but of the living Christ who overthrew the works of sorcery and broke the spells of demons.[5] Thus the occurrence of miracles and their evidential value were generally assumed; the task of the Christian apologist was to show that his interpretations of the prophecies were the true ones, and that the miracles to which he appealed were genuine and greater than all others. It would be unfair and misleading to maintain that these forms of apologetic were the main cause of Christian success. The Christian teaching and the Christian life, the courage of their martyrs, and that brotherly love or Christian charity which created a world-wide fellowship ready everywhere to receive the Christian traveller, were the ultimate forces at work. Nevertheless, prophecy and miracle remained the stock-in-trade of the Christian apologist from the earliest days until a day very near to our own.

The importance ascribed to the miracles recorded in Scripture was further emphasized in the later history of Christianity. It should not be forgotten that, until comparatively recent times, the historicity of the Bible, including all the accounts of miraculous events, whether in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, remained unquestioned. It was assumed, not only by Christian teachers and by simple believers, but also by men of the world with little care or respect for the higher demands of Christianity. To have questioned it would have been as though we were to question the map of the world or the general form of the solar system — facts to us unquestionable, though in those days still largely unknown. Christianity had no longer any seri-

[4] On written records of miracles, and their use as propaganda, see A. D. Nock, *Conversion: The old and the new in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo*, pp. 83-91.

[5] *E.g.* Origen, *c. Celsum*, I, lxviii; II, xlviii-li; Athanasius, *de Incarnatione*, xxxviii, xlvi-l.

ous rivals in the world of Europe, and there could no more be any problem of establishing its miracles as superior to those of other faiths. Moreover, belief in the continued occurrence of miracles, at all events of miracles at all comparable with those recorded in Scripture, gradually declined. Even in the early centuries Christians like Origen and Irenaeus, who believed that the power still remained in the Church, felt that it was less frequently manifested than in the days of the Apostles. And with the rise of Protestantism, suspicious of ecclesiastical miracles, there was a tendency to regard the power as having ceased in the Church. Consequently, the miracles of Scripture came to hold a position more exclusive and at the same time less challenged than in the days when they were first appealed to as evidence. Naturally, therefore, they seemed an impregnable basis for the truth of the religion with which they were associated. With the rise of the Age of Reason, the miracles were brought into still greater prominence. The general shift of emphasis from authority and tradition to reason, and the new sense of mastery of the world which came with the growth of the natural sciences, reversed the relative importance of Natural and Revealed Religion, until to some Revealed Religion appeared a questionable, even a superfluous, addition to Rational or Natural Religion. In consequence, the defence of Revelation was made to rest more and more exclusively upon special evidences or external guarantees, *viz.* upon the evidence of prophecy and miracle. The philosopher John Locke, towards the close of the seventeenth century, though defending the 'reasonableness of Christianity,'[6] could still appeal confidently to the miracles of the New Testament as sufficient evidence of the truth of the Christian revelation. In his view, they were performed by Christ and his Apostles expressly to establish the truth of their teaching. The same method of argument was still followed by William Paley a century later. But the very forces which brought the miracles into greater relief gradually undermined the ground of their credibility. The eighteenth century is an important period in the history of theological thought, less on account of new developments in Christian doctrine as such, than on account of the new problems which arose. For the first time the authority

[6] John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity.*

of the Bible was felt to require defence. The occurrence of the miracles could no longer be assumed on the ground that they were recorded in Scripture, and the new sense of the order and regularity of nature, due to the success of physical science, made belief in miracle still more difficult. From about the time of John Locke, the attitude to miracles gradually changed. They remained an important element in Christian apologetic almost till our own day; but, instead of being treated as the principal evidences of Christianity, they were defended as events credible in view of the truth of Christianity. The change is well illustrated by a sentence from a writer of the latter part of the eighteenth century, Soame Jenyns, member of Parliament for the borough of Cambridge. 'The miracles recorded in the New Testament to have been performed by Christ and his Apostles,' he wrote, 'were certainly convincing proofs of their divine commission to those who saw them . . . but, I think, they must now depend for much of their credibility on the truth of that religion, whose credibility they were at first intended to support.'[7] It needed only the further growth of the knowledge of the natural world, and the rise of historical study with its appreciation that what men find in the world is conditioned largely by the ideas they bring with them to its interpretation, to complete the process of change. Miracles could no longer be regarded as important evidence of the truth of Christianity. Some were actually incredible; even those still believed were in need of defence. When to this was added the fuller knowledge that all the great religions had been associated with belief in miracles, most of which were generally admitted to be incredible, miracles became increasingly an embarrassment to the Christian apologist.

Yet the question of miracle retains an interest and an importance. The almost universal association of religion with belief in miracles shows that there is some deep-seated connexion between them. It is not difficult to account for this connexion, at least in part. The problem with which Christianity is now most directly concerned is whether this account provides the complete explanation. Religion is the recognition of something abiding and unseen beyond the transient and visible we speak of as the

[7] Soame Jenyns, *A View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion*, 1776, Introduction.

natural world, of something which also gives to the natural world itself its fullest meaning and worth. A life is religious when inspired by the sense of its presence and reality and directed by the recognition of this further meaning. This sense is often awakened most vividly by striking and unusual events which cannot be accounted for completely in terms of conceptions that seem sufficiently to explain more normal events. Then, whether they strike terror into the man who witnesses them, or inspire his confidence and evoke his gratitude, they are more than wonders or marvels, striking events incompletely understood, because at the same time they awake this sense of divine presence. When the religious sense or recognition takes the form of belief in God, thought of after the analogy of a human person, it is natural to regard these events as due to God's special presence or action; and, when the understanding of natural sequences is limited, it is natural also to interpret His action, by analogy with the display of unusual human power, as a special intervention in the natural world, surpassing any purely natural or human force, without considering the problems this creates for the understanding of the course of the world as a whole. The term miracle in its specialized sense is, of course, applicable only when the idea of an order of nature is in some degree developed; for a miracle is not any event with a religious meaning, but one which seems to involve in some sense a breach or suspension of the natural order. But only when the scientific and philosophical interests are more fully developed, *i.e.* when a more systematic effort is made to trace the interconnexions of natural events and to understand God's relation to the world's course as a whole, does this conception present any difficulties. Thus the religious sense may cause events, which are really striking and significant, to be regarded as also miraculous when they are not. A fuller understanding, however, though it may remove the appearance of miracle, need not destroy the striking character or the religious meaning; it may deepen the appreciation of them. But, further, before this higher level of understanding is attained, interpretations which from the higher point of view would be quite irrational may be both natural and reasonable; and this may affect actual observation. Eye-witnesses may seem to themselves to be actually seeing things happening in ways in which

they are not really happening, in ways which, in the light of greater knowledge, would immediately be recognized as impossible. The form and content of what, in the usual sense of the phrase, is actually seen are conditioned by presuppositions, interests, and desires, in a degree far exceeding that commonly recognized; and the less systematic and extensive the knowledge of the observer, the more likely is it that these subjective factors will distort his vision instead of assisting it. Similarly, stories which would be incredible in the light of more complete understanding may be believed without question; for the credibility of anything is determined, not merely by what it is in itself, but by the context of ideas into which it has to be fitted. Thus the religious sense, when combined with limited understanding of the natural world, may lead men to believe that events are miraculous when they involve no breach of the natural order, or that events occurred when they did not occur; and this may be so, even though the religious sense itself is the recognition of a real and fundamental aspect of the world. In these ways, belief in miracles may be really religious, due to genuine apprehension, though at the same time involving error and distortion. It is therefore not surprising that doubt or denial of miracles has seemed to many equivalent to doubt or denial of their deepest, and in a sense of their truest, convictions. Belief in miracles, when in this way really religious, is certainly not a subject for contempt. It may imply real insight, real apprehension of the meaning of the world, though in a distorted and partially erroneous form. And to lose belief in them may, in some circumstances, lead to the loss of this insight, or may be a consequence of it.

Belief in miracles may be associated with religion for a further reason. It may give vividness or intensity to religious belief. We never wholly cease to feel that the visible and the tangible are the most real. What, then, can be more natural than to look for visible and tangible evidence of what is more important to us than anything else? And when the sense of the divine is weak, or when the evidence against its reality seems overwhelming, is it not natural to long for its confirmation in events in which we do not merely believe it to be at work but actually see it and touch it? This is certainly one reason for the

religious interest in marvels and prodigies. The interest is closely connected with the veneration of images and material things, which are probably never expressly identified with the holy. The two, in so far as they are two, have not yet been distinguished, because the idea of the holy has not been dissociated from that of the thing or place which was its first, and is still its most vivid, embodiment. There are moods, which perhaps come to most people at times, when these forms of belief, though suspected and resisted, make a strong appeal, or at least become thoroughly intelligible. Until a better way is open, these beliefs are neither irrational nor evil; they are merely evidence of incomplete development. But to remain at this point of view when another has become possible is a mark of degeneration. It is no accident that the sceptic, in the thoroughgoing and irrational sense, is the most ready to accept the evidence of marvels.

These considerations certainly account in part for the association of religion with belief in miracles; but the question remains whether they account completely for the place miracles have held in Christian experience. The Bible contains accounts of a large number of apparently miraculous events, and, as we have seen, through the greater part of Christian history most Christians have believed that they occurred exactly as recorded. To-day most people would be willing to regard the miracles of the Old Testament at all events as they probably regard those of other religions; they would treat them as evidence of past religious belief or experience, but would not accept them as having actually occurred in the ways recorded. But the part of the Bible to which we attach most importance, the Four Gospels, contains accounts of a larger number of such events than any other part of equal length. These accounts are so closely woven into the texture of the history that they cannot easily be separated from it. The Gospels without their miracles would leave a very different and much less vivid impression than they leave at present. They show us at least what kind of impression Jesus made upon His contemporaries, or at least upon those who believed in Him very shortly afterwards; and it is a question whether the record of His miracles can be accounted for wholly by the sort of considerations I have mentioned.

Some of these records of miracles, especially those connected with the birth of Jesus and the belief in His resurrection, have been intimately associated with fundamental Christian doctrines. There are those who would find in this association a reason for treating these records differently from the rest. They would be willing to recognize that the accounts of, *e.g.* the feeding of the multitude, the stilling of the storm, or the seven miracles in the Fourth Gospel, may not be accurate records of what occurred, but they would decline to treat in the same way the accounts of those miracles specially associated with the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Resurrection and affirmed in the Creeds. I do not think this difference of treatment is defensible. If there is reason to think some of the accounts have been influenced by contemporary ideas and by subsequent tradition and beliefs, it is likely that the others have been too. I believe it is also a wrong method of apologetic. The fact that some of the miracles have been held to be of special importance and are affirmed in the Creeds means that, like all miracles more or less, they were believed to be signs or evidences of something beyond themselves. They were not valued as so much mere occurrence in the visible world, though of course it was not doubted that they actually occurred; they were valued as revealing something of profound importance for an understanding of the spiritual world. But it does not follow that if we doubt the event as recorded we must necessarily doubt what Christians thought had been revealed in that way. The new apprehension which they gained may survive the form in which it first came to them. We have already seen that presuppositions about the natural world, and ideas of the manner of God's action in it, may profoundly affect what men seem actually to see; and we have seen too that greater knowledge, whilst affecting the whole form of the religious apprehension, may at the same time enlarge and intensify it by liberating it from the limitations and distortions which restricted understanding first imposed. It is this which justifies a distinction between the religious construction and the literal meaning of ancient creeds and statements of doctrine. The contention implied in this distinction is not that these formularies were originally taken in a symbolical or metaphorical sense; they were accepted in what was then their literal mean-

ing. The contention is that their literal meaning in the context of our present beliefs is different from, and always less significant than, their literal meaning in the context in which they were first affirmed. And this is true, not only of statements of philosophical or doctrinal theories, but of statements about historical events. The Christian Creeds are not primarily forms of words, nor even affirmations of truths considered apart from temporal occurrences. They are affirmations that certain events occurred and had a certain significance. We can never really separate the one aspect of what is affirmed, *viz.* that an event occurred in a certain way, from the other aspect, *viz.* that it had a certain significance; and this is especially true of the Christian affirmations verbally expressed in the Creeds. If, then, the original religious apprehension, conditioned by various presuppositions and limitations, differs in form from the present religious apprehension, conditioned by other presuppositions, we must either think differently of the events through which it first came, or find those events less significant than the first Christians found them. What we think actually happened will be rather different from what they thought actually happened; and the element of miracle may perhaps disappear just because we continue to find them significant. Just as in some circumstances to lose belief in a miracle may be to lose religious belief, so in other circumstances to retain belief in the miracle may be to restrict or distort religious belief. I wish therefore to maintain explicitly, not merely that it is legitimate to doubt the occurrence of events in the miraculous form recorded in the Gospels, but that unreadiness to do so may hinder religious apprehension and distort our understanding of the full significance of what occurred. The great difficulty felt by many religious people in accepting the accounts of miracles is due to this cause. Their difficulty is not merely an intellectual one, due to the apparent conflict between these accounts and what is now known of the natural world, though this intellectual difficulty underlies it; it is also a religious difficulty, due to their sense that full religious apprehension is hindered and confined by being expressed in these forms. This does not seem to be appreciated by those who insist that the occurrence of some at least of the miracles must be affirmed

at all costs. To preserve continuity with the great stream of Christian experience is vitally important, especially in a period of unusual change. Not all ages are able in an equal degree to create the ideals needed for their own life; each age draws upon the past, and in a peculiar degree each successive Christian age has drawn upon that age in which the distinctively Christian vision was seen for the first time. But in order to understand and learn from the past, we must preserve the right to criticize it. Some, who do not believe in Christianity, or think that its life is nearly spent, represent the past two or three hundred years as the period of its gradual disintegration under the stress of forces from without. Others, who would defend it, and think that to do so they must preserve its doctrines and practices entirely unchanged, are committed, I think, to the same view. I believe they are wrong; but if they are right, I am sure they are faced with a desperate and impossible task.

Yet I do not underestimate the difficulty of the alternative method of conservation I have accepted. We are familiar with the phrase 'the essence of Christianity.' It seems sometimes to be thought that its essence can be, as it were, distilled from the concrete forms of Christian belief and practice and inhaled in the pure state. But the Christian soul cannot be nourished on sustenance of this kind; not because, as a human soul, it is too gross or earth-bound to thrive upon it undiluted, but because a religion, a real religion, must be profoundly concerned with the full and varied detail of this actual world. To preserve a vision seen in the past we must translate it, if we can, into the forms and colours of the actual present, so that it may enlighten and inspire this age as it enlightened those before.

Before I turn finally to the narratives in the Gospels — and I shall confine myself to them — I must say something further of the conception of miracle itself. So far I have not attempted to use the term with any close precision. But we have already seen incidentally that an event, in order to be called a miracle in a sense consistent with the ordinary use of language, must fulfil four conditions. It must be (1) an unusual event, (2) an event which cannot be accounted for in terms of what is regarded as the natural order, (3) an event interpreted as a sign of special

divine presence and due to divine operation,[8] and (4) an event in the sensible world, something visible, tangible, or audible. An earthquake, however unusual and inexplicable, is not regarded as a miracle unless it awakens the sense of divine power as its cause; nor is an event which is too frequent, because it then ceases to be regarded as abnormal, however incompletely it be explained; nor, again, is a great experience or a great personal influence, if it does not have some conspicuous effect in the sensible world, such as making a sick man whole. Yet as soon as we attempt to define the conception more accurately, we find that what seemed a precise notion was really vague and indefinite. In consequence, no precise definition is applicable to all those events, and to those only, which might be described as miracles consistently with recognized uses of the term. For example, we find that our definition is applicable to some events which would never be called miracles, or inapplicable to others which might be; or that we have defined the conception in a way which would make it impossible to recognize a miracle for certain, even though one were to occur; or again, we find we have defined it so that a miracle is something essentially relative to the spectator's attitude or interpretation, and so not a miracle absolutely. We may consider a few examples. We may make the interpretation of the spectator an essential element in the definition. 'A miracle then,' wrote John Locke, 'I take to be a sensible operation, which, being above the comprehension of the spectator, and in his opinion contrary to the established course of nature, is taken by him to be divine.'[9] If we adopt a definition of this type, we can no longer say with certainty of any event that it will be a miracle to all men; for no definite limit can be set to the range of possible comprehension. And, in any case,

[8] Of course, demons may work miracles, and so may human beings under divine or demonic influence; but, for the present purpose, we need not distinguish between divine and demonic operation, since both are 'supernatural'; and when human beings work miracles, it is supposed to be by power specially conferred on them from a 'supernatural' source. As was noticed above, however, these further questions were very important in the earlier Christian centuries, and even in much later times. The easiest retort to an apologist who appealed to the miracles associated with the religion he was defending was not 'They never happened,' but 'They were the work of demons'; and it was the hardest to refute. *Cf.* Mk. iii, 22, and the passages in Origen and Athanasius referred to above.

[9] John Locke, *A Discourse of Miracles,* published posthumously in 1716.

some events which are miracles relatively to men with a particular set of presuppositions and a particular range of knowledge will almost certainly not be miracles to others with a very different range of knowledge. According to another definition, a miracle is an event due to direct divine operation as opposed to divine origination through so-called 'second causes.' This definition assumes a metaphysical theory of the relation of God to the world which is open to various objections. But, even if this theory be granted, the definition departs very widely from the common meanings of the word. We could not recognize any event as certainly a miracle in this sense; for before we could be sure that it was not produced entirely by 'second causes' we should have to know the system of nature exhaustively. And, on the other hand, for the same reason we could never be sure that an event was not a miracle. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, though not then for the first time, miracle was most often defined with reference to the 'laws of nature,' of which it was supposed to be in some way a breach or a suspension. Whether such a definition is intelligible, and what it means, will depend upon the meaning assigned to the term 'law of nature'; and it will not be necessary, for the present purpose, to consider in detail the problems involved in that question. But I think we should find again that the definition departed in some way or other from normal uses of the word miracle. The greater appreciation of the vagueness and indefiniteness of the popular notion of miracle was one cause of the loss of confidence in the value of miracles as evidence. The question which most people are really asking when they enquire whether miracles happen is whether certain events recorded in the Bible or elsewhere really occurred and, if they did, what importance should be ascribed to them; but they confuse this question, more or less, with the question as to the best definition of miracle, or with the question whether miracles, in any precisely defined sense, have occurred. I shall therefore not consider the problem of definition further.

But many of those who defined miracle as a breach or suspension of the laws of nature were inclined to go further and to assert that certain alleged events were impossible because they were contrary to laws known to be of universal validity. I do not think we can assert that any of the so-called miracles in the

Bible are contrary to laws of that kind. We cannot, strictly speaking, assert that their occurrence was impossible. We are justified in asserting them to be contrary to the laws of nature only if what we mean is that they appear to conflict with laws or generalizations reached by induction from observed facts of the natural world; and as soon as we begin to be concerned with laws of this kind we leave the realm where we can know strict certainty and impossibility and descend to the realm where we can only estimate probability. The most we can say certainly is that some of these laws are based upon so wide a range of observation, and have been used so successfully in predicting the future, that any exception to them is in the highest degree improbable. Whether any of the events recorded actually happened is, therefore, a question of evidence, and of evidence which, strictly speaking, yields only a more or less probable conclusion. If we take account of all the relevant evidence, we are justified in asserting that some of them are so improbable that for all ordinary purposes they may be treated as utterly impossible. Others are less improbable. Others again are quite probable, at least if we are willing to make some allowance for possible error in the original observation, or in the later written records.

When we consider the evidence, we must be careful to take account of all the evidence that is relevant. It is sometimes said that even some of the more extraordinary events are as well attested as other events which no one doubts, *e.g.* that the bodily resurrection of Jesus is as well attested as His crucifixion, or that the raising of the daughter of Jairus is as well attested as the trial before Pilate. These statements are absurd. The evidence for a past event never consists entirely in what is usually called the historical evidence, *viz.* recorded testimony, archaeological remains, and other evidence of that sort. Even if it did, we could not conclude merely from the volume of such evidence. We have to estimate its value, *e.g.* to consider its date, its source, its variety, and the degree in which the different strands are independent. And here all those subjective factors which I have already mentioned are of immense importance. But, in fact, every historical judgement is based upon a far wider range of evidence; it is determined by what we believe about the world in all manner of further respects. The raising of the

daughter of Jairus would require far more and far better testimony to establish it than the trial before Pilate, because the evidence against it is far more varied and extensive. This is, indeed, obvious; but it has been so frequently disregarded that in consequence many defences of the miracles are merely special pleading. We have, however, to set on the other side, as part of the relevant evidence, the nature of the circumstances in which the events, if they really happened, took place. Many of the miracles (I retain the name for convenience of reference), especially those in the Gospels, are recorded as performed by persons, and in connexion with a religious movement, in the highest degree unusual. It may be quite reasonable to expect in those circumstances events of a sort we should not expect in more normal circumstances. But what sort of events can reasonably be expected in such circumstances is a further and more difficult question. That Jesus exercised quite unusual influence over other people, their bodies as well as their minds, is entirely credible. He seems to have attracted great attention by His power of healing, sometimes more attention than He desired, and crowds followed Him about to see it at work. But that He walked on the water, or with a word caused a fig tree to wither away, is a very different and far less credible supposition. The evidence against it is of a different sort and much more extensive. Again, we expect people of unusual gifts or character to surprise us by what they say or do, even when we know them well; they have powers of thought and action which exceed our own. But we also expect that what they say or do, though unpredictable and surprising when it occurs, will afterwards be found in accord with their character, that it will make us understand and appreciate both them and other things more than we did before. We feel many of the acts and sayings of Jesus to be of this kind; and even when they continue to puzzle and perplex us, we feel that this is largely because our knowledge and appreciation remain defective. But this cannot be said of all the miracles. Some of them help us to appreciate Him only in the sense that we feel they are the sort of things some people, but not we ourselves, might have ascribed to Him when greatly impressed by His presence or when convinced later that He had fulfilled a rôle they believed in for independent reasons. The

evidence against these miracles is very strong, and it consists partly in the very greatness we ascribe to Jesus Himself. It would be idle to attempt to estimate merely in general terms what sort of unusual events, or how many of them, might be expected in connexion with the life of Jesus or the rise of Christianity. Estimates would, in any case, be influenced by general and often largely implicit presuppositions. Some men are more impressed and attracted by the order and continuity they find in the world, others by its surprises and apparent discontinuities; and each will judge accordingly. But we may look briefly at the miracles themselves in rather closer detail.

The miracles of Jesus Himself are now usually grouped in two classes, those affecting other persons, especially cures of diseases and infirmities, and those affecting the conditions of the physical world. From our point of view, this distinction has a real justification; but it is important to notice that the evangelists paid little attention to it. They do not record that those in the latter class (which for convenience I will call physical miracles) created a greater impression than cures, and they represent them as effected by the same means. For example, in *St. Mark* we read that when curing 'a man with an unclean spirit' Jesus 'rebuked' the spirit, saying 'Be quiet, come out of him!' and that a little later in the storm on the lake He similarly 'rebuked' the wind and said to the sea, 'Be silent, be quiet!'[10] This suggests that those who reported these things were not greatly interested in how the works were performed; it was enough that Jesus, or God through Him, had done wonderful things, so that men 'glorified God.'[11] In their eyes, the physical miracles were not essentially different from the cures. We are more interested in the process. We understand to some extent how the influence of one person on another can work cures of mind and body, and we have in any case a great deal of evidence that it is so. But we can find no explanations that will account at all comparably for the physical miracles in the form in which they are recorded, and we have little other evidence to support them. In our eyes

[10] καὶ ἐπετίμησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων Φιμώθητι καὶ ἔξελθε ἐξ αὐτοῦ. Mk. i, 25.
καὶ διεγερθεὶς ἐπετίμησεν τῷ ἀνέμῳ καὶ εἶπεν τῇ θαλάσσῃ Σιώπα, πεφίμωσο. Mk. iv, 39.

[11] Mk. ii, 12.

there is therefore a great difference between the miracles affecting other persons and those affecting the physical world, and we are fully justified in treating the accounts differently. Not many events of the latter kind are recorded in the Gospels, and I do not think we can accept any of them as they stand. But the fact that the evangelists, and those from whom they received the stories, did not clearly distinguish between these and the others enables us to understand better how they may have arisen. Those who reverenced Jesus or were amazed at His powers were led naturally to magnify the wonderful works by which His greatness was shown to men, and, in view of their failure to distinguish as clearly as we do between the two groups, they may well have magnified them in ways which we find incredible though they did not. To others at the time, it made them merely more wonderful. But it does not follow that these stories have no kind of historical basis. They may, for example, be the outcome of wrong observation, perhaps under emotional stress, or, again, a consequence of accidental confusion in later transmission. Thus, it has often been observed that the story of the withering of the fig tree in *St. Mark*[12] has some affinity with the parable of the barren fig tree in *St. Luke*.[13] Whether or not this is the true explanation in this case, it suggests ways in which error may have arisen. In some cases, there has been deliberate magnification, though of course not wilful distortion. In *St. Mark* the fig tree has withered when seen next day; in *St. Matthew* it withers immediately, in consequence of the curse upon it.[14] We cannot always find satisfactory explanations of this sort; but that we should expect. It may be entirely logical to feel sure that the events did not happen as recorded, and yet to feel sure of no particular explanation. Our information is so slight, and the range of possible explanations therefore so large, that no particular explanation has any high degree of probability. We are not likely ever to know for certain what happened to give rise to these stories.

We must, I think, follow the same method with some of the stories of the cures, at least with their details. That Jesus really restored a man's ear after his ear had been cut off is not credible. But exaggerations of this kind are easily accounted for. The

[12] Mk. xi, 12-14, 20-25. [13] Lk. xiii, 6-9. [14] Mt. xxi, 19.

difficulty is greater with those cures which seem to be concerned with 'organic' as opposed to 'functional' diseases or infirmities; though it is not, I suppose, certain whether this distinction is ultimately tenable. Some of the cures are represented as cases of exorcism. The explanation of disease in terms of demonic possession certainly underlies many of the accounts, and if they are at all accurate it must have been accepted by Jesus Himself. But where a cure is due to personal influence and to the faith of the sick person, it may perhaps make little difference what explanation of the disease is accepted by the healer and his patient. And I suppose that belief in possession may to some extent actually affect the symptoms: if you believe you have a demon inside you, you behave differently from the way in which you would have behaved had you accepted another explanation. In a few cases we can actually trace the process by which these cures came to be represented as easier and more instantaneous than they were. In *St. Mark* we have traces, some of them omitted in the later accounts, showing that cures required effort, that they took time, that the faith of the patient was an essential condition of success, and even that some attempted cures were not successful.[15] All this is as we should expect. There remain unexplained incidents, *e.g.* a few cures at a distance. These we must probably put down to error, though possibly the absent people had been told what to expect. There are two accounts in the Synoptic Gospels of raising from the dead. I cannot myself believe that they really occurred; but the same kind of treatment is, of course, possible in these cases also. In one of them, the raising of the daughter of Jairus, Jesus is reported to have said she was not dead but asleep. This may give a hint of the truth. But it is doubtful whether any of the evangelists understood the words in this sense. St. Luke certainly did not; for to the words 'they laughed Him to scorn,' he added the words 'knowing she was dead.'[16] Yet plenty of

[15] *E.g.* Mk. vii, 32-36 (not in Mt. or Lk. unless in Mt. xv, 30, or in Mt. xii, 22 = Lk. xi, 14, where in any case no detail is given); Mk. viii, 22-26 (not in Mt. or Lk.); Mk. vi, 5-6 (=Mt. xiii, 58, but note Mt.'s alteration of Mk.'s καὶ οὐκ ἐδύνατο ἐκεῖ ποιῆσαι οὐδεμίαν δύναμιν, εἰ μὴ ὀλίγοις ἀρρώστοις ἐπιθεὶς τὰς χεῖρας ἐθεράπευσεν into καὶ οὐκ ἐποίησεν ἐκεῖ δυνάμεις πολλάς).

[16] Lk. viii, 52*b*-53 (=Mk. v, 39=Mt. ix, 24).

vidence remains for believing that Jesus worked wonderful ures; that we cannot be certain exactly what cures they were s not very important.

Some, I know, will feel that I have treated the accounts rbitrarily and have left very little where we seemed to have nuch. But the treatment seems arbitrary only when we forget hat the relevant evidence does not consist solely in recorded estimony. And I do not feel that the portrait of Jesus suffers. t seems to me that we have a truer and a more impressive pic- ure of Him if we understand in some degree how His personal nfluence was exercised than if we see Him as one who worked narvels we can in no way comprehend; and I do not think we an both reach that understanding and continue to accept all the niracles at their face value. Yet even those we reject tell us nuch, and a good deal about Jesus Himself. In reading them ve see Him, not indeed face to face, but reflected as it were, often very imperfectly, in the minds and hearts of those who evered Him. To know one person's reverence for another, ven when that reverence takes strange forms, is to know some- hing of him whom he reveres.

In conclusion, I will speak briefly of the two groups of ccounts which to many present the greatest difficulties, *viz.* the ccounts concerned with the birth of Jesus and His resurrection. Ve have already seen that these accounts have been specially ssociated with the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Resur- ection. I wish, therefore, to emphasize in the first place that e cannot identify the question of the accuracy of these accounts ith the question of the truth of the doctrines, though the way n which we understand the doctrines will certainly be influenced y our treatment of the accounts. My main contention through- ut has been that this is just the sort of identification we must ot make. Certainly the accounts were once taken literally, and o question them would have seemed to many to be equivalent o questioning the doctrines. But I have tried to show that, if e now in our different circumstances make this kind of identi- cation, we hinder and distort Christianity to-day, and also fail eally to understand the Christianity of the past. The earliest vidence we have for the belief that Jesus was conceived in a niraculous or 'supernatural' way is contained in the birth-

narratives in *St. Luke* and *St. Matthew*. These Gospels were probably written not earlier than about three-quarters of a century after the birth of Jesus, though both were complete at a date not many years later. The accounts are widely divergent. Whether the belief in the special mode of His conception was current at a much earlier date, and if so how widely, we do not know. It is not stated, and probably it is not implied, in any other part of the New Testament. When these two Gospels were widely known, it became almost universally accepted, and so it passed into common Christian belief and is affirmed in the two Creeds now in most general use. It seems to me certain that this testimony is quite insufficient to establish an event of this kind, unless we think its occurrence specially appropriate to what on other grounds we believe about Jesus. We can think of various reasons which may have led to the belief, and we know of reasons by which it has since been defended. Opinions may differ as to whether these reasons are good reasons. But whatever opinion is adopted, this is the issue on which the question really turns for we have no testimony sufficient to establish the event unless it is held to be probable on other grounds. I do not think they are good reasons, though I can understand why they were thought so. I am sure that the belief that Jesus had no human father is not essential to belief in the Incarnation; and I think the belief, instead of enhancing the meaning of the Incarnation lessens and narrows it. But if we take this view and do not believe that He was miraculously conceived, we need not cease to admire the great wealth of Christian sentiment and devotion which has collected round the belief and has found expression in a great variety of forms, in art and in poetry, though sometimes also in less noble ways. We may continue to love and admire these expressions, amongst which are the beautiful stories in *St. Luke* and *St. Matthew*.

The resurrection-narratives raise more difficult and more complicated problems. The narrative commonly, but I believe wrongly, thought most important is that which tells how the tomb was found empty. In *St. Mark* we read only of how the three women went early to the tomb, found the stone rolled away, saw a vision of an angel who said Jesus was risen, and fled full of fear saying nothing to anyone. If this story records a

ctual event, it probably represents it more truly than the later ccounts in the other Gospels. These later accounts add more letails, they make the scene more definite and, from a certain oint of view, more convincing. But I think this is the sort of levelopment we should expect. The additional details do not, believe, make these accounts really more circumstantial; they upply answers to the sort of questions that were asked by be- ievers afterwards, or perhaps by those who did not believe. This seems plain in the case of some of the details, such as the tory of the sealing of the tomb in *St. Matthew*, or the descrip- ion of the positions of the grave-clothes in *St. John*. In the pocryphal Gospel of Peter, some of these details are still urther elaborated and the love of the supernatural is plainly isplayed. Whatever the source and the explanation of this tory may be, it is very doubtful whether we have here the real asis at all of the conviction which restored the broken faith of he first company of disciples, set them telling each other what ney had found, and drove some of them forth to show it to thers, in action as well as in word, and in the face of persecu- ion. It is not, for example, amongst the events to which St. 'aul appealed as evidence of the Resurrection. Their experi- nce is probably better described in the accounts of the appear- nces of the risen Jesus Himself. We have not many of these, ven if we put together those in *St. Luke*, *St. Matthew*, and *St. ohn*. There are brief references elsewhere. St. Paul appeals) a series of appearances, which do not seem to correspond with nose in the Gospels. St. Paul was convinced that the risen Lord ad appeared to him also, not less really than to Peter or to ames.[17] He gives no detailed account of the event in his letters, nd we do not know closely how he would have described it; for 'e cannot be sure that the description in *Acts* is exactly his own. Ie, at all events, cannot have thought that the only evidence nat Jesus was risen was events that took place in Jerusalem (or 'as it Galilee?) on the first Easter Day and during the period 'hich immediately followed it; and it is not, I think, certain nat he thought of the other appearances to which he appealed s of such a kind that anybody who happened to be present ould see them. His own experience is probably better evidence

[17] I Cor. xv, 3-8.

than the accounts in the Gospels of what the experiences of the first disciples were like. If someone who did not share their conviction had been with them on those occasions, I do not suppose he would have seen anything more unusual than signs of an excitement and an enthusiasm he did not understand. But his failure to understand would not have consisted in failure to see and hear things; it would have consisted in a failure to grasp the full meaning of their conviction. On the other hand, if some present-day Christian could somehow be transported to that time and place, he might understand their conviction and yet see or hear no bodily form or voice of Jesus, such as these narratives in the Gospels suggest. The narratives are fragmentary and uncertain; we cannot weave them together, or make from them a continuous story. They must in some sense be derived from the descriptions given by those who were convinced that Jesus had really appeared to them. But the narratives as we have them are those descriptions after they had been re-told again and again through a period of, say, forty, in some cases fifty, even sixty or seventy years. They have without doubt been elaborated in various ways in the process of re-telling. Perhaps they have also been altered in another way, so that what was really an experience more like that of St. Paul on the road to Damascus recorded in *Acts*, has come to be represented as an experience, shall we say, more like that of the disciples with Jesus as they followed him for the last time from Galilee on the road to Jerusalem. But they have not been wholly altered in this way. A story like that of the disciples on the road to Emmaus tells of what still seems to hover, as it were, between the two.

I cannot estimate with confidence how many were convinced of the presence of Jesus in a form which to them seemed actually audible or visible, nor what form these experiences took. We know that others in later ages have had visions in which they seemed to see the risen Jesus. But I think that most of the details in the narratives as we now have them are answers to questions asked later. Some are perhaps actual recollections, given definite form as they were afterwards re-told. For example, some may have been convinced that He came to them when gathered at their supper, called soon afterwards the Lord

Supper; and with this may be connected the story that He had actually eaten with them.[18] There can be no doubt that the form of their conviction was determined by existing beliefs. For instance, most of them probably already believed that there would one day be a general resurrection, whether of the righteous only or of others also. Probably, like most later Christians, they believed it would be a bodily resurrection, their own bodies raised up. The conviction that Jesus had risen was therefore a conviction that He was raised in bodily form. St. Paul, and no doubt some others, held a rather different theory: it was to be a 'spirit' body; for flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, nor can corruption inherit incorruption[19]; and so too it must be with the risen Jesus. Similarly, they had looked for a Messiah, perhaps had already trusted that this Messiah was to be Jesus Himself. And hence their conviction that He was not dead, but risen, was at the same time the conviction that He was exalted and soon to come again in even more glorious form. Others, again like St. Paul, thought or came to think rather differently; and, in consequence, their thought of Christ Jesus was rather different too. In any case, if the experience came in the forms of voice and vision, I think these forms were as much the product as the cause of their sudden conviction. Sudden it undoubtedly was; and, as Wellhausen once wrote, to try to eliminate this suddenness from the history of religious movements is a mistake. Yet, if sudden, it was also the integration of ideas and hopes, of things seen and learned with their Master before. In this it was like all conversions, when new insight and conviction come as it were in a flash of light, such as St. Paul seemed actually to see when he was converted and believed.

But what I wish most to emphasize is that neither the content nor the ultimate ground of this great conviction, the starting-point of the Christian Church, can be understood in terms of anything merely audible or visible. To understand their conviction, to see what it really meant to them, we must look far more widely — at what they felt impelled to do and to teach and, if need be, to suffer. This, and nothing less, is the real content of the faith of the Resurrection; and in many ways we understand it much better from the Christian movement which fol-

[18] Lk. xxiv, 42. [19] I Cor. xv, 50.

lowed than from these fragmentary scenes in the Gospels, glowing though they may be with the light of conviction. And there too we find the real evidence of the truth of their belief. Had it meant less than this to them, no audible, visible, appearances could have kept their conviction alive.

Already in the first century the faith of the Resurrection had more than one form, as we see from the New Testament itself. Some of those forms have now passed away, or been transmuted into other forms. But the faith of the Resurrection lives on; and, as with all faith, its whole content and the evidence of its truth are ultimately one. The evidence is not, and never was, things merely seen and heard; for the things which are seen are temporal. These were the accidents of time and place and occasion; and they now convey the content and evidence of this faith even less perfectly than they did then. To understand this faith, we must seek to understand what it still means to believe that life is stronger than death, and the Christian form of life stronger than other forms of life. Jesus is still central in this faith, which we discern, not merely as it was first expressed, but enriched by the thought and experience of all the Christian ages since. It is the same faith; yet, as I have tried to show, if we would make it really the same faith, and not something less, it must come to us now as the light of all we know, as it came to them then as the light of all they knew.

INSPIRATION AND PROPHECY

By Charles E. Raven, D.D., Regius Professor of Divinity, Cambridge.

WHY, at such a time as this, should we return to the rudiments, to problems which were decided two generations ago and on which liberalism has long been accepted as orthodoxy? Is it really necessary to repeat our conviction that fundamentalism is a heresy of which the only whole-hearted supporter was Marcion, who because he took the Old Testament literally believed its inspiration to be demiurgic or diabolical; that critical methods of study are inevitable and must be pursued in the sole interest of truth; that the prophets could not, and did not, foresee the remote future or provide us with cryptograms from which to deduce the triumph of the British Empire or the date of the end of the world; and that the validity of Scriptural as of all other testimony depends on the circumstances, characters and capacities of its authors?

It is obvious, of course, that there are still multitudes of people in Christendom who would dispute these convictions with heat and violence. In the prevailing insecurity of the time crude superstitions which we had thought long abandoned have not only been revived but have shown an extraordinary power of fascinating minds otherwise intelligent. Many of us, conscious of a debt to German scholarship which no eulogy can properly express, must have been shocked into incredulity by the spectacle of a great people assenting to beliefs which, beneath a flimsy pseudo-scientific mask, reveal plainly the features of primitive and horrible cults. But if we have made ourselves at all familiar with the literature of British Israel we shall know that creeds at least as nonsensical and ethics equally savage can be found without crossing the North Sea. If folks otherwise sane can accept and act upon the new Aryanism, or believe in the sequence of Dan, Danai, Danube, Denmark, then we can no longer wonder that so many of the bright lights of the immediately post-war generation have made their submission to the

Papacy, or that Dr. Karl Barth and Dr. Frank Buchman are alternatively hailed as the saviours of Protestantism. In face of these phenomena it may be necessary for us to begin our work again from its alphabet.

At the mention of Dr. Barth I would pause for a moment. For it seemed to me at one time that in his influence was to be found the reason for a paper on this subject. Let me make plain at once that though I cannot cease to criticize him as thinker and theologian, I would affirm passionately his right to the title prophet; that I have always, in my little way, shared his insistence upon worship, upon penitence, upon sin, and upon the futility of merely human effort — if any such there be; and that if I had to choose between the humanism of Columbia University or the transcendentalism of the Barthians I should not follow the former even if I found it difficult to follow the latter. Nor should I hesitate (for my own part) to admit not only that an attitude of humility and reverence is essential to the student of the Bible, but that there is truth in the contention that the Word of God carries convincing power and that the adorability (or numinousness) of an utterance is a factor to which the critic must pay heed.

To make such an admission might seem to surrender our position. If inspiration is to be judged purely by the response which it evokes in us, if we are to say, 'Accept this revelation as of God and you will discover its saving power,' then indeed all our labour over textual, exegetical and historical research has been in vain. If we are to argue, as has been done in one or two recent books, that it is impossible to get behind the Christology of (say) the year 70 A.D., that at that time the Son of God and Son of Man formula was universal, and that any consideration of the life of Jesus must start with that formula, I can only reply that for my part this cuts the knot which I believe, if we value the historicity of our faith, we must strive to untie. And if anyone doubts that such scepticism leads, and in Dr. Barth's case has demonstrably led, to subjectivism, then let him read carefully the involved and surely wrong-headed interpretation which Dr. Barth puts, for example, upon the twelfth chapter of *Romans*.

I see no escape from such a conclusion on the Barthian

premisses. Scholarship, like politics or industry or social reform, is a human activity. Dr. Barth regards all such interests as essentially unrelated to religion. They are the strivings of the creature to measure or to replace the Creator. They have in fact landed us in great and terrible calamities. We should all agree that if they ignore God and are motived by human pride, such results inevitably follow. But because human activities are imperfectly Christianized, or because the transition from Liberal Protestantism to Eschatology and from the study of Comparative Religion to that of Form Criticism leaves us tired and perplexed, I cannot see any justification for repudiating such activities or for behaving as if our long course of critical studies had only ended in collapse. Nor can I believe that a new theological epoch, of which my late and revered friend, Dr. Forsyth, was the forerunner and Dr. Barth is the Messiah, has begun. We may accept as a timely warning the Barthian insistence upon a half-truth: we must not at our peril mistake it for the whole. Of human reason as of other activities *abusus non tollit usum.*

It was because there is here a real danger seriously affecting the whole position of our movement that at one time I felt that this paper should be devoted to the new fundamentalism which Dr. Barth's teaching encourages. To the danger we may perhaps pay some heed. You will all know that though few British theologians would accept the Barthian position without apology and reserve, it is being widely used in many quarters as a ground for asserting that a liberal theology is not only mistaken but *demodé*. It was, I confess, a real pleasure to me when some five or six years back a young man first told me that I was hopelessly old-fashioned and out-of-date; for it came when our most popular Church paper was castigating me as an innovator and branding my work as new-fangled. But, since then, the compliment has ceased to appeal; and when I find it applied to men whom I revere and to beliefs which are the product of deep wisdom and ripe scholarship, it arouses in me not only resentment, but alarm. It is so easy to brush aside the patient research which has disentangled from the complexities of the New Testament a living picture of the Christ with an easy sneer at its pre-Barthian liberalism. To do so it is not even necessary to understand it, much less to have taken part in the quest.

When we find this attitude widely adopted (as it now is) and combined with a somewhat esoteric assurance that those who stand for a reasonable faith are mere rationalists and unbelievers, it is not wonderful that the Bishops of the Northern Province should bind us to one of the more difficult phrases of the Nicene formula or that we should be within measurable distance of seeing an Apollinarian and Monophysite Christology adopted as the only orthodoxy. A few catch-words — 'there is no such thing as the Jesus of history,' 'those who say that Jesus is God for us mean that He is not God at all,' 'humanism is the real enemy of religion,' 'the divine Christ is essential to a fully Christian soteriology' — become popular slogans by much repetition; and as we know ecclesiastical authority is very suggestible.

At this point the necessity for consideration of our present subject becomes at once apparent. If it is true, as I believe it to be, that the revolt against humanism, aided by the pessimism of the times, by the legitimate emphasis upon worship, and by the vogue of Dr. Barth, presents a serious threat to the progress of liberal and reasonable religion, then our answer to it must begin with an exposition of the true nature of the relationship between God and man and of the religious experience of which inspiration and prophecy are representative. For in the study of inspiration, or at least of the particular form of it associated with the Biblical records, liberalism has established an unanswerable case. That case if plainly stated will hardly be challenged by any competent scholar: in regard to the treatment of Scripture we are all liberals nowadays. Then we have to insist that the principles which hold true in the field of Scriptural inspiration involve a view of the method of God's relationship to men which is valid in all other fields. Here our task is more difficult; for as we know most of us are capable of accepting a set of principles for one field and refusing to apply them elsewhere — of rejecting the verbal infallibility of the Bible and yet of maintaining the irreformability of creeds or the universal necessity of episcopacy. But it ought not to be difficult to show the illogicality of such a position, even if in fact vestiges of old and rejected ideas take an unconscionably long time in disappearing. Having shown the need for consistency, we can then

conclude by indicating that our theory of inspiration is incompatible with belief in the total 'otherness' of God, in His operation *ab extra* and arbitrarily, in an Apollinarian Christology, and in doctrines of salvation which ignore human responsibility and co-operation. Such in outline is my thesis.

Of inspiration there can be only three theories, which we can roughly label the fundamentalist, the allegorical, and the critical. A glance at the history of Christian thought will prove that though the Church has fortunately never formulated a definition of inspiration, it is only in the third of these that any serious treatment of the Scriptures can result.

That 'all Scripture is inspired of God' is a conviction which more plainly than any other has commanded the universal assent of the Church. It is indeed no small proof of the extent to which Christianity is rooted in history that this should be the case. Theories which ascribe a mythical origin to our faith or assign much importance to the influence of the mystery religions or of Hellenistic speculation upon it, have to meet here a serious and probably fatal obstacle. Christendom took over the Jewish sacred books because it was rooted in Judaism, and had used the argument from prophecy as a chief support for its earliest apologetic. When the faith passed over to the Gentile world, its Jewish heritage was not altogether easy to deal with. We can trace the embarrassment which it caused to St. Paul, and the difficulty becomes more apparent when we find the Marcionites rejecting it absolutely, the Gnostics decrying it as 'somatic,' and the author of the *Epistle of Barnabas* allegorizing it. But so strong was its hold upon the general mind of the Church that the orthodox confined their criticism solely to the question of what particular books fell within the range of inspiration, and to the devising of symbolic interpretations by which the awkwardness of those which were undisputed could be explained away.

If Scripture were to be regarded as inspired, and if the contrast between Old and New Covenants, not to mention the ethical and literary difficulties in much of the older scriptures, made any belief in its literal inspiration impossible, allegory was the natural and easy mode of explanation. Of its attractiveness we are all aware: most human beings are fascinated by the

search for hidden meanings, hidden hands, hidden murderers. Clement of Alexandria only did for the sacred writings what Mrs. Nesta Webster has done for the story of socialism or what you and I do when we follow the clues with Mr. and Mrs. Cole. Moreover, its plausibility is sufficiently great. We all know that all language is inevitably symbolic, that in particular the deeper experiences of religion defy any other description, that the exact appreciation of Eastern and Semitic symbolism requires nice and profound scholarship, that there is an element of conscious allegory in most of the canonical writings. Allegorizing as the great Alexandrians practised it might perhaps be justified were it not for two objections which eventually proved fatal. Its obvious weakness is that it speedily degenerates into pure subjectivism. An ingenious exponent can literally make any statement bear any meaning that he wishes to impose upon it. By a few deft transpositions black becomes white, and a command a prohibition. If Scripture is a collection of enigmas, its riddles can easily be read in radically different ways, and there is no criterion, except perhaps the ingenuity of the solution, which can discriminate truth from falsehood. Behind this weakness lies another. Allegorizing as practised assumed a mistaken theory of inspiration. It involved the belief that God took plenary possession of His human creature, and dictated to it subtleties of which it was totally unaware. Such a theory not only threatened to undermine the historic basis of the faith by substituting a series of cryptograms for what purported to be a record of facts, but outraged the intellectual honesty and common-sense of thoughtful Christians. Anyone who thinks this too strong a condemnation would do well to compare the Christ of the allegorizers with the Jesus of Q or of St. Mark. Among all the various and divergent pictures of our Lord there is probably no other contrast so complete.

Hence it was inevitable that a more excellent way should be discovered, a way which had been followed by some from the earliest times, but which could only be formulated when Christian scholars had turned their attention to the problem of man's relation to the divine, to what we should now call the psychology of religion.

It was to the scholars of Antioch and particularly to Theodore of Mopsuestia that the development of critical study is chiefly due. Their essential reform consisted in an insistence upon discovering the author's real and original meaning. They refused to treat the books as literary Melchisedeks without genealogy or length of days, as oracles awaiting appropriate application; and declared that the circumstances of a writing and the character and competence of its author must furnish the primary clues to its exposition. Behind this conviction lay a reasoned belief that God, always willing to reveal Himself, would only do so where His creatures yielded themselves to His guidance. Inspiration was neither cryptic nor arbitrary: it depended not solely upon the divine initiative, but upon man's ability to receive and respond to the divine indwelling. They refused, as Catholic orthodoxy has always done, the ruthless determinism of Augustine, and had the courage to sympathize, even if they did not wholly agree, with the much-maligned Pelagius. For they saw, even more clearly than he, the ethical, metaphysical and religious dangers which the denial of human responsibility involved.

Of course Pelagius is a condemned heretic and his great opponent more deservedly a canonized saint. To examine in detail the doctrinal ingenuities by which Pelagianism is still anathematized and yet the freedom of the human will has become a fundamental principle of Catholic orthodoxy would be both tedious and in parts unedifying. Suffice it to assert that no theologian of repute is likely to defend the theses of the *Contra Julianum* or would hesitate to admit (unless his fear of condamination prevented it) that in refusing to believe that man was a mere pawn, incapable of co-operation with his Creator, Pelagius was standing for an essential of religion; and that, not so much because Augustinianism outrages the worth of man, but because it debases the Christian concept of God. If 'Our Father' is the normative description of the Deity, then there must be between Him and His children a relationship not less intimate than that of person with person. Augustinianism, like all the doctrines of pure transcendence, denies such relationship: man becomes not a child but a chattel; and God not the Father

but at best the Sultan and at worst the Absolute, and in either case not the object of Christian devotion or of the revelation in Jesus Christ.

Holding fast to the belief that Christian theology involves some measure of mutuality in the relationship of God and man, Theodore and the school to which he belonged were able to develop a theory of inspiration appropriate to the facts. It would be an exaggeration to credit them with full mastery of the critical method; for like all their contemporaries and indeed all thinkers until the nineteenth century, they had little sense of history or of the idea of progress. Indeed the concept of evolution which to-day dominates our thinking, though it is found in a strikingly modern form in Origen and less clearly in his precursors, the doctors of the Logos-theology, was never (so far as I know) applied to the Scriptures until Thomas Arnold and his German teachers began to do so a century ago.

Nowadays, when even the most conservative scholars will admit that large sections of the Old Testament reflect relatively primitive beliefs and that redaction has not eliminated the evidence of still more crude and unedifying survivals, we can demonstrate without the possibility of refutation that the critical theory of inspiration is alone sustainable. The authors of the sacred writings were men whose religious psychology we can appreciate from our own experience. They had access to no knowledge which their spiritual faculties could not assimilate nor their tongues tell: in their measure (in very varying measure) they were conscious of God's will and set themselves to fulfil it; and where there was a combination of spiritual grandeur and intellectual capacity the result was a real unveiling of the divine. The constraint laid upon Jeremiah which he describes so poignantly and reveals so profoundly: the insight and searching beauty of great poems like the nineteenth psalm; the long wrestling of the *Book of Job* with the most daunting of human problems; the insistence of the Second Isaiah upon the redemptive value of suffering — what need is there to multiply examples of the sheer sublimity which these men of old time could attain? The pity of it is that mistaken views of inspiration have hardly yet enabled us to give them their due mead of reverence or to discriminate between the splendours of the Bible and

ts lapses. Have I not spent many weeks recently, striving to dify the choir of Ely by twice daily lessons from the career of King David — and growing ever more convinced that, magnifi-ent as is the language and drama of the descriptions, their hero was indeed what my revered predecessor named him, 'a blood-hirsty and lascivious brigand'? And how are we to expect a ensitive Christian outlook when our people are encouraged to egard the story of Ahithophel and the Sermon on the Mount as qually proceeding from the Word of God?

Such inspiration gives us the clearest analogy from which to nterpret the Personality of our Lord. For myself the contrast ometimes drawn between inspiration and incarnation seems to e unreal. God is surely in some degree incarnate in His crea-ion, manifested in divers manners at its different levels. He is ncarnate in mankind so far as men yield themselves to the cknowledgment and obedience of His Spirit. So at least St. Paul's repeated use of the simile of the body and its members would teach us. His incarnation is revealed fully and uniquely n the perfect manhood of Jesus Christ, in Whom we confess the nion of God and man. The fulness of that union other lesser xperiences of inspiration do not enable us to appreciate: they upply hints and analogies — not more: but such hints seem to ne the only guides that we possess, if we would make real the ignificance of what must otherwise be interpreted in terms of ythology. If the claims made by Irenaeus and by Athanasius — 'He became what we are, that we might become what He is' nd 'He became human that we might become divine' — are alid, then the mode of the divine operation in Him and in us annot be radically disparate — must, I believe, be similar and onsistent, explicable (if at all) under the same categories.

So to me it is in the light of the inspiration of a Jeremiah that would approach the mystery of Jesus. In Him the Word mani-ested in the prophets came to full utterance: in Him God whose adiance they had dimly reflected revealed His perfect image. o treat of Jesus as a Rabbi, though admittedly He was so tyled, or as an Apocalyptist, as the Lamb of the supreme sacri-ce or the Saviour-God of the supreme mystery-religion, is to all short of His significance alike in the New Testament and in hristian experience. To set Him in the succession of the pro-

phets may itself be inadequate: but such a status is to my mind the least unsatisfactory that we can use. For it indicates that the spiritual achievement of mankind hitherto supremely displayed in Jeremiah has now in Jesus attained its fulfilment. It is in the men who entered into His Spirit, in the writings which disclose to us His person, that religion finds its highest expression.

Let me conclude by mentioning one or two practical corollaries of our enquiry. If inspiration is not a mechanical impulse equally strong whatever be its human agent, then surely we are called to 'prove all things and hold fast only that which is good' — in the lessons in our services not less than in our private readings of Scripture. The old habit of attaching merit to a continuous cover-to-cover recital of the Bible has indeed been broken In the New Lectionary we are no longer committed by the accident of date to wholly haphazard selections. But that Lectionary seems to me at least sadly inadequate in its arrangements for Sundays and gravely erroneous in its week-day programme. Here and there one can find a festival on which the First and Second Lessons show some sort of connection, either by way of similarity or of contrast or of modification. Generally they are entirely unrelated alike to one another or to the season and occasion or to the rest of the service. Many of them are incomplete; some of them are, to put it mildly, unedifying. As elements in public worship they seem usually unsuitable.

Yet how great an opportunity could be made if they were appropriately chosen! If instead of assuming that particular books must be chosen *seriatim*, the lectionary was planned so as to omit altogether all passages in which the level of inspiration was low, and to choose such as illustrated the theme emphasized by the Collect or by the season; and if the clergy were given freedom to alter the selection so as to link the lessons with sermon or special prayers, we should not only escape much irrelevance and some embarrassment, but bring a precious element of reality and unity into our services.

It is perhaps unwise to add that the proposal to permit the reading of selections from other Christian writings than those of the New Testament Canon seems to me a necessary consequence of our view of inspiration. There are passages in the *Ad Diognetum*, in Justin and Clement, Origen, Athanasius and Augus

tine which are far more Christianly inspired than some of the canonical books. If we are allowed to read the Jewish Apocrypha it is surely not unreasonable to urge that lections from Christian saints and prophets might be chosen and sanctioned by ecclesiastical authority. May I commend the preparation of such an anthology to any of the members of our Union who have time to undertake it? If it were thought too revolutionary to use it on Sundays, at least it might be a very real help for special services like those of the Mothers' Union for which appropriate lessons are few and overworked. Surely Christ came for naught unless there are post-Christian writings more fit than those of the old dispensation to edify a congregation. Inspired utterance did not begin with *Genesis*: it certainly did not end with the *Apocalypse*.

Here is a second corollary. Inspiration in Scripture as in the life of to-day is conditional upon the human response to the divine Spirit. He that hath eyes to see, let him see: he that hath ears to hear, let him hear. That conclusion is surely one of universal applicability. But if so, we cannot limit it to the critical study of the sacred writings. The same principle will rule out all belief in the sort of divine intrusions or overrulings which are supposed to guarantee the inerrancy of Councils or to distinguish between the worth of episcopal and non-episcopal ministries. It is surely not logical, it is certainly inconsistent, to accept the test of fruits when dealing with the Bible and to refuse to apply it when dealing with creeds or modes of Church Government; to recognize mythology and magic in the Bible and to justify them in doctrine or cultus. Yet in fact this is what is freely done. Where there is perfect union and complete correspondence between human and divine, as in the unique Person of our Lord, there we can know the truth. Will anyone venture to maintain that the Fathers of Nicaea or of Chalcedon, or the Churchmen who developed the ordered hierarchy, were capable of a similar response, an equally perfect union with God? And if not, what right have we to claim infallibility or permanence for their decisions?

We are workers together with God, members in the body of Christ, sustained by the Holy Spirit, the giver of life. No ingenuities of exegesis, no emphasis upon the otherness of the Creator, no appeals to our sense of adoration and of penitence,

can eliminate those convictions from the religion of Jesus Christ. Those who accept them will find that the point of view for which we in this Union stand is inevitable; that they involve conclusions in regard to inspiration which bear directly upon all other aspects of religious belief; that they justify the painstaking research which for the past century has been patiently reshaping the form and scope of traditional orthodoxy; and that they encourage us in times of crisis like the present to go forward without fear and without apology. The attempt to discredit methods approved by a century of research and based upon Christian concepts of God and His mode of revelation must not deter us from carrying forward our work to its triumph.

THE ORIGIN, GROWTH & ADEQUACY OF THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

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I HOPE to be allowed to preface my paper by a few words of personal explanation. I wish to assure the Conference ow deeply I appreciate the honour of being invited to contri- ute this paper, and even more the kindness of allowing it to be ead in my absence. I had hoped to attend the Conference but was called away to Paris early in May, and am consequently revented from being in England in September.

Here I desire to say that I have, since I left Cambridge ore than eighteen years ago, never lost my keen interest in the Iodern Churchmen's Union and in our Annual Conference, of hich, I am proud to say, I was one of those who suggested that should meet for the interchange of the views of the members f the Union. It is a source of genuine pride to me that I have een asked to contribute to the discussion of a subject of such nportance as the present.

My object in writing this paper has been to try to indicate at the result of what the Church has accomplished silently and y processes of which we have little or no information are of ore importance than those which have convulsed the world. he rise of the Christian Scripture was as silent as that of the ed which grows up and he who sows it 'knoweth not how.' he Church as an organism had little or nothing to do with it, t the New Testament is the greatest creation of the Christian irit. It is an indestructible monument erected by unknown embers of that great Church of which history has left no record.

This paper is not intended for learned scholars but rather r plain folk, the object being to show how and by what ethods the Church acted in a matter of supreme importance. is often said in one form or another that 'The Church made

the New Testament and not the New Testament the Church.' When the Faith in Jesus Christ appeared its professors had the same Scriptures as the Jews. These are the Bible of the New Testament writers, and sufficed for their purpose, which was to prove that Jesus was the Christ, and that all He had done and suffered had been foretold. But circumstances soon arose to create a demand for a distinctly Christian Scripture to supplement the Jewish Bible, used by the rapidly increasing community of believers.

To understand how this demand was satisfied it is necessary to bear in mind that from the first the Faith was being accepted, not only emotionally by the downtrodden and ignorant classes, but by men of education. The Gospel was certainly not promulgated in an illiterate age, and it seems improbable, at least to me, that any Jew of the time could be described as entirely uneducated. Those who accepted the message of the Twelve, like Barnabas, Paul, Mark and Silas, were assuredly not members of the uncultured classes. This is important for our purpose, which is to show that neither the writers of the New Testament nor the Church which at a later date accepted it can justly be described as 'unlettered and uneducated men.' Even if the Greek they wrote was not 'academic,' it was not that of men who were lacking in the power of literary expression; and from the earliest days there must have existed some kind of Christian literature.

This literature was remarkably various. If the letter to the Romans reveals the logical ability of St. Paul, it also indicates that the Apostle wrote of a highly intelligent community. If the unknown author of the Epistle to the Hebrews was a practised man of letters, he evidently did not address an illiterate circle of believers. On the other hand, as we now know from the papyri even uneducated people were accustomed, much as they are today, to write to one another, even though they could not express themselves, or even spell, correctly. We may be sure that there were very crude conceptions of the meaning of the Gospel, a craving for tales of wonder and miracles and a literature designed to satisfy these demands—indeed we know that it was so. From the first days of the Faith we find that there was no lack of what we should term forged documents. In one of his earliest epistles (II *Thess.* ii. 2) we learn that spurious letters

were circulated in St. Paul's name, and that he had to take precautions to indicate that what he had actually written was genuine (II *Thess.* iii, 17; *Gal.* vi, 11). We know further that there were many attempts to write the life of Jesus (*Luke* i, 1), and that obviously fictitious books were quoted as authoritative Scripture (*Jude* 14). Many indications have survived of a considerable literature under the most venerable names in early Christianity, which had evidently a widespread popularity and were regarded as authentic. How out of this mass of material the New Testament came into being is almost a literary miracle, revealing a power of selection and an excellence of judgment hard to account for unless we suppose that those who exercised so wise a discrimination were divinely guided.

The wisdom of the Church in this respect appears not only in what it selected as New Testament but in what it rejected.

The earliest book of the non-canonical writings which has survived is probably older than some of the Scriptures of the New Testament, and was at an early date attributed to one of the most attractive men who belonged to the Apostolic circle. (Joseph, who was known in the Church as the son of Consolation (Barnabas), was the leader of the first missionary enterprise despatched by the Church of Antioch. Not only does his name appear in the *Acts of the Apostles* and in the Pauline Epistles, but it has a prominent place in Christian legend. Although the writer observes a strict anonymity, it was a tradition that he was Barnabas. The Epistle almost certainly belongs to the First Century, and deals with the burning question of the day, the transitory character of the dispensation of the Jewish Law, compared with the permanence of the Gospel revelation, of which the ordinances of Moses were a mere foreshadowing. The writer has a remarkable knowledge of the ancient Scriptures, and his interpretation of their significance, by its ingenuity, must have excited the admiration of those who first enjoyed it. The ethical teaching is much the same as that of the New Testament, and served as a basis of instruction for converts.

One of the most remarkable things about 'Barnabas' is that, instead of defending its authenticity, the most orthodox of critics have to admit reluctantly that there is much to be said in favour of it because they are pained at the thought that so good a man

as St. Barnabas, the friend of St. Paul, could have written such overstrained allegorical interpretations, mingled with illustrations from a Natural History absurd even in his unscientific age. Although the Epistle appears in a venerable Codex in the New Testament, it is creditable to the wisdom of the Church that it has never been accepted as Scripture.

If the space at one's disposal permitted, much the same might be said of those two valuable and instructive survivals of the Apostolic Age emanating from the Church in Rome, the Epistle of the Roman Church to the Corinthians, popularly ascribed to Clement, who was thought to be the friend of St. Paul (*Phil.* iv, 3), and the *Shepherd of Hermas*, who was at an early date identified with the Hermas saluted in the *Epistle to the Romans* (xvi, 14). Like Barnabas, these documents have found a place in an ancient and costly MS. of the Christian Scriptures, the famous A (Codex Alexandrinus). A casual glance at either convinces the reader that in both shines forth much truly Christian piety, and at the same time passages exist which would be a terrible stumbling-block if Clement and 'Hermas' ranked among the Scripture of the Church. Witness, to take but one example, Clement's use of the fable of the Phoenix in Egypt as an argument for the truth of the Resurrection of the Christ!

From the very first there was a natural desire to know more about the earthly career of our Lord than we can gather from the canonical Gospels, and we know that by the close of the Second Century this demand was being satisfied. Apocrypha Gospels abounded telling us about the birth, the infancy, the youth of the Saviour, and have created legends about Him which are an influence on Christian thought down to the present day. It cannot be doubted that these legends enjoyed a wide popularity, and are probably far older than the dates now assigned to their first appearance. They are accessible to all in the Provost of Eton's Apocryphal New Testament, a hasty perusal of which convinces one of the wisdom of the primitive Church.

From the above-named book we learn that the fortunes of the immediate disciples excited an interest only second to that of Jesus. It is remarkable how completely nearly all of the Twelve Apostles disappear from history, and yet what great importance

as attached to their authority. Creed, Succession, Canons, Constitutions are all entitled Apostolic, yet of Apostolic labours little is known. The want was supplied by various Acts, some as early as the Second Century, but the Church has been contented with one book of *Acts*. Only one Apocalypse revealing the unseen world was allowed to survive as Scripture, and even its authority was a subject of dispute.

When we consider the result of the unknown process by which the different books of the New Testament were recognized as authoritative Scripture we may admire the general wisdom displayed in their selection. Modern critics may question the judgment which allows such books as II *Peter*, *James* and *Jude* to be reckoned as Apostolic; but they cannot deny that there is hardly anything in these Epistles which is unsuitable to a book of Scripture, or unfit for public reading. As for the Revelation of St. John the Divine, we have only to compare it with those attributed to St. Peter or St. Paul to recognize its superiority. We have to allow that the Canon was by no means settled by the end of the First Century; but I think we can assume that something had already been done in that direction to judge by what we observe in I *Clement*, and *Barnabas*, not to mention other writings which are generally admitted to belong to the first half of the Second Century. The noteworthy point is that there is no evidence of any formal or authoritative recognition of a Christian Scripture to support or even to take its place by the side of the ancient Bible of Judaism.

When we leave the First Century we begin to see more clearly how and why our New Testament came into being. When we began to read the history of the primitive Church and had finished the first chapters, our bewildered attention was directed to the Gnostics, and if we stopped to enquire about these curious folk, it was to marvel at being told that any people held such foolish ideas, and, if they did, why it was necessary that we should have to read about them or to remember their strange opinions. But to these aberrations from the original purpose and sense of the Christian Church we owe the New Testament. The Good News or Gospel was the proclamation of a coming deliverance, not the appearance of a Sacred Book. The Gospel came as the very antithesis of the written Law. Those who ac-

cepted the Message preferred the 'living voice' to the authority of any document. In fact the only written material carefully preserved seems to have consisted of a few letters which had been kept out of regard for such a writer as St. Paul, and read in the assemblies of believers. Still, the literary output of the new religion may be admitted to have been much more abundant than we can prove to have existed, and out of this a selection had to be made. This was necessitated by the circulation of a rival literature, some under the most august names. No one was more honoured as the repository of the true Christian tradition than Peter; and a gospel by the leading apostle would be preferred to any by such comparatively obscure authors as Matthew, Mark or Luke. Consequently a gospel according to Peter duly made its appearance, the rejection of which is very significant.

Serapion, Bishop of Antioch, as Eusebius relates, had discovered that the Christians of Rhossus were using a gospel attributed to Peter. He had learned that the community was divided and paid a visit to their town, an obscure place some thirty miles distant from Antioch. He learned that the cause of dispute was a gospel under the name of Peter. Strangely enough he had not seen the book himself, but inferred that it was harmless if not authentic, and allowed it to be read. When he returned to Antioch he was informed that this Gospel contained Docetic teaching. We know now something of the contents of the last part relating to the trial, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ. Carelessly glanced at, it might appear that 'Peter' was nothing more than another account, not unlike that in our Gospels, but for a single remark that our Lord hung on the Cross 'as though he felt no pain,' which of course would countenance Docetism.[1] But the action of Serapion, although all we know about it is only by a very brief and not over-clear letter of his copied by Eusebius (HE vi. 12), is for our purpose significant. In the first place, in the bishop's time (A.D. 190) there was evidently an unauthentic and apocryphal Scripture, used by Christians, which the authorities were quite ready to allow their people to read. In the second, Serapion seems quite ready to assume that this Gospel was substantially orthodox, and only interfered with its

[1] The Docetists denied the Incarnation and taught that the body of Christ was a phantasm, not a human body of flesh and blood.

irculation when he discovered in it a latent heresy. Finally, here does not yet appear to have been a definite line drawn etween the New Testament books and those which resembled nem. Judging by the little Serapion wrote, he ignored the whole uestion of the authenticity of the work under Peter's name. I ave laid stress on this Petrine gospel and Serapion because the ction of the bishop, already occupying the most influential see n the East, proves how slow was official recognition of a Chris- ian Scripture in the form of a New Testament. The Church ssuredly did not make the New Testament; the two grew up ogether.

Irenaeus marks an important stage in ths story of the Christian criptures. This remarkable man is a link between Apostolic hristianity and the developed and widespread Catholic Church. native of Asia Minor, he taught in Rome and became Bishop f Lyons, a commercial city on the Rhone in constant communi- ation with the Near East. In his conflict with the Gnostic sects, renaeus had to oppose those who wished to add to the authori- ative Christian writings, and also another school of Gnosticism hich tried to excise from them all passages which conflicted ith their preconceived ideas. The chief representative of the ast-named was Marcion, the most modern minded of the critical cholars in the early Church. To refute these Irenaeus brings orward the four Gospels accepted by the Church, and gives an rgument, strange to our ears but doubtless convincing to his earers, why the information about the work of our Lord should e neither more nor less than that contained in our Books. Thus efore the close of the Second Century we have signs of the ppearance of sacrosanct Christian Scriptures, side by side with he holy books of Judaism.

I have ventured to suggest that discussions on the Canon of he New Testament have been complicated by arguments as to he authenticity and date of the several books, whereas the real oint is their recognition by the Church as equally and even nore authoritative than the writings of the Old Testament. For e notice that the earliest Christian list of sacred books confined o the Old Testament is that of Melito of Sardis, a contempor- ry of Irenaeus. He calls these the 'books of the Old Testa- ent,' which by no means may be assumed to connote a New

Testament in our sense of the words. To the Christian of this period one of the most important features of the Gospel was, not so much what Christ had said or done, as that He had fulfilled all that the Prophets had predicted of the Messiah. From our point of view this may seem strange; but at this time, if Jesus could be proved to be the Messiah, faith and obedience might be taken as a matter of course. This explains the determination of the Church to keep the Old Testament; for few indeed, as Marcion had done, troubled about the question of the moral character of the God who inspired it. As to the Christian documents, they may have seemed of less importance when the tradition concerning the Saviour was as living as we know it to have been. The vitally important matter was not so much whether the Christian literature was authentic, as whether its books were in accord with the universal traditions of the Church. The early reception of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* is an example of this. Here we have a book so highly honoured both in Rome and Alexandria that, though anonymous, it was attributed to St. Paul despite the fact that scholarly men recognized that it had few traces of the impress of the Apostle. At the same time all recognized its excellence and readily included it among the most honoured writings of the Apostolic Age, in contrast with the *Epistle of Barnabas*, which was obviously inferior in tone and argument. We have still to wait awhile before we find the New Testament of even greater importance than the Old; in the Second Century it seems to have been hardly regarded as Holy Scripture in the same sense.

The expression, Canon of the New Testament, is misleading if it is taken in the sense of a formal decree that certain Books, and these only, should be regarded as exclusively Christian Scriptures. What the New Testament should include was ultimately settled, not as a law (canon) of the Church, but by the silent and finally unanimous consent of the Christians. The VIIth Article of the Church of England indicates this, when it gives a list of the Books of the Old Testament, supplemented by the Apocrypha, which may be read 'for example of life and instruction of manners,' and adds that all the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, 'we do receive and account them Canonical.' This brief statement is scholarly: there has

ever been, strictly speaking, a canonization of the New Testament: the Church received it as a matter of course.

But despite the plain facts there is a popular belief that omehow or other the Church took action at a comparatively arly date. The first recorded conciliar action was by an assembly at Laodicea of a few bishops of questionable orthodoxy, ne integrity of whose 59th Canon is, to say the least, doubtful. The exact date is not known, but it is supposed to be about .D. 375 or earlier, and only some thirty-two bishops were present. Anyhow, after this date the New Testament appears as e now have it. It should, however, be noticed that as a rule the Christian Scriptures are not so much selected on the ground of neir inspiration, but because they are suitable to be read in the Church services. For certain lists the *Revelation of St. John* oes not appear; and some may recall the fact that it was not irected to be read in the Old Table of Lessons in the Anglican Prayer Book of 1662.

By the Third Century we have the New Testament almost n its present form, and early in the next century the Church was orced to make a practical decision as to what books were to be onsidered as belonging to its Sacred Scripture. The so-called Diocletian persecution was a deliberate attempt to suppress the Christian religion by law, inspired by the intellectual classes, ho regarded it as dangerous to the existing order of society. nti-Christian propaganda was encouraged in the schools, and ne destruction of the New Testament was part of the proramme. When the commissioners demanded the surrender of Christian books it was the duty of those to whose charge they ere committed to suffer martyrdom rather than give up a Scripure of the Church. But as the officials of the government were ften ignorant, or corrupt, it was possible to surrender someiing that had outwardly a Christian appearance in place of a opy of the Gospels. There were consequently books which ight be handed over without incurring serious guilt and others hich it might be even meritorious to cause to be destroyed. Thus it may be inferred that to save a copy of a Gospel it was a enial sin to let the persecutors take the *Shepherd of Hermas*, nd almost a merit to let them think they had secured a comentary on the Fourth Gospel when they had only committed

the work of a Valentinian heretic to the flames. This enhances the value of the testimony of Eusebius about the writings of the New Testament, when we bear in mind that he had survived the persecution and was writing at a time when it might possibly be renewed. In this chapter of the Third Book of his Ecclesiastical History, it is well known that Eusebius classified the Christian books under those of unquestionable authority, those which have been subject to dispute, spurious writings, and, lastly, those to be condemned as proceeding from heretical authors.

Practically there are only seven doubtful books in our New Testament. Of these, three (I and II *John* and *Jude*) are no more than single short chapters. *James* and II *Peter* are of the nature of sermons for the use of the churches, and their uncertain authorship rather than their contents has made them suspect. None of these 'epistles' are found in the earliest Syriac translation of the New Testament, except possibly the *Epistle of James*. It would be a matter for regret if they had not found a place in our New Testament. There remain only the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, which, as has been remarked, deserved its place because of its inherent excellence, and the *Apocalypse*, the visions recorded in which have certainly caused trouble in the minds of those who interpreted them too literally, or hoped for the fulfilment of them in an immediate future.

The whole subject of the Canon of the New Testament has proved to be anything but attractive to the average student, and perhaps this is due to belief that the Church formally recognized the existence of a catalogue of its inspired as distinguished from its uninspired writings. There has been a general impression that Christian writers accepted the books solely on the ground of their authorship—often wrongly attributed—whereas it may be that they went far deeper than that, and placed a book on the list because of its value to believers. Nothing, to my mind at least, makes the collective wisdom of the Christians of the first age more conspicuous than a study of the so-called sub-Apostolic writers, whose work, with many merits, seems to be infinitely inferior not merely to the best, but to the most criticized parts of the acknowledged Scripture of the Church. Studied with more attention to historical circumstances, the story of how the Christians got their own Scriptures would be far

ore interesting. It would show us how the new community ame into existence without any very definite idea of the rcumstances which called it into being, albeit in a not illiterate ge. The expectation that the Saviour would immediately ap- ear made the believers comparatively indifferent to anything xcept that this could be proved by the Scriptures of the old)ispensation. It is evident from the recorded speeches in *Acts*, om the early letters which have survived, and even from the orms the creeds ultimately assumed, that the Gospel was pri- arily the story of the Death and Resurrection of the Christ. hen St. Paul appeared, a learned Pharisee who did not belong the immediate circle of Christ and the Twelve. During his xtraordinary missionary labours he wrote a few letters in which e showed an original spiritual insight into the significance of ie appearance of Christ on earth. That these letters were ap- reciated and carefully preserved by Paul's converts is almost iraculous, and even more so that they were treasured and dis- eminated by his converts, some of whom were probably opposed much of his views. Paul's Epistles may be ascribed as in- ugurating the Christian literature.

When we consider the form, alleged authorship and contents f the Synoptic Gospels their reception is as wonderful as that f the Pauline Epistles. They testify to an interest in the minis- y of Jesus which could not have been awakened among those ho looked for His immediate coming to deliver His people. hristianity entered into a new stage when the words and acts f the Founder were becoming as important as His Resurrection om the dead and His return in glory. Now they realized how Ie desired those who looked with hope to Him to live during ie period of waiting.

But for a generation or so the supreme desire of the believers as to know what those who had seen the Lord, or associated ith those who had seen Him, had to tell rather than to depend written statements; and even the Synoptic Gospels must for time have been in abeyance. There were other written records; nd that the Church chose these as authoritative is a proof of its isdom, nay even of its divine guidance. Thus far we have the rowth of the Faith : first a hope, then a rule of life and conduct ased on the Lord's ministry; later we reach the next change in

a Gospel which shows what He whom the faithful had accepted actually was. This had been indicated by Paul's letters and was supplemented by the doctrine of St. John in the Fourth Gospel. On the rest of the New Testament I need not here dilate.

But the story of its origin and development is really an account of the development of the Christian Faith, and, regarded in this light, no one can say that it can be lacking in interest. When divested of technicalities, however necessary speculative theories as to text origin and authorship may be, it ought to be attractive, not to scholars alone, but to every Christian whether learned or not.

But if the New Ttestament is an indication of the evolution of the Christian religion, its recognition throughout the believing world raises the important and difficult question of the rapid spread of the unity of the Church. We might naturally infer that the Christian religion diffused itself by means of a number of isolated communities cut off from all communication with other similar bodies. And yet we can assert that within a century after the Resurrection and Pentecost there was formed a collection of Christian books which with a very few exceptions were universally accepted in every part of the Roman Empire and beyond its borders. And we can only wonder at how this came to pass. The Scripture of St. Paul, the greatest and most successful of missionaries, was practically our Old Testament, and he is only once reported to have quoted a saying of Jesus, which is, moreover, not preserved in any Gospel. There is no evidence of the Churches coming to any agreement on this most important matter of the Scriptures, on which the fabric of the Christian Faith and practice was to depend. All we have any knowledge of is the supreme fact that it happened — how we know not. That the New Testament came into being is the most significant event in Church History.

THE BIBLE IN NATIONAL LIFE AND LITERATURE

By H. G. Wood, M.A., Director of Studies, Woodbrooke Settlement, sometime Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge.

AMONG the inestimable benefits, wherewith Almighty God hath wonderfully blest this your majesty's most honourable and prosperous government, it is not to be numbered among the least that under your most gracious and Christian protection the people of your highness' dominions have enjoyed the most necessary and comfortable reading of the holy scriptures in their mother-tongue and native language.' In these terms Dr. William Fulke dedicated to Queen Elizabeth his defence of the English translations of the holy scriptures, and incidentally put on record the most revolutionary change ever sanctioned by Elizabeth or her father. For the encouragement extended by the authority of the Tudor monarchy to the most necessary and comfortable reading of the holy scriptures in the mother-tongue had more enduring consequences for England than any other feature of the Tudor policy. It is no extravagant claim when we assert that no political or economic revolution in the history of England has been more important than the decision to place the Bible in the hands of the people. Indeed, political changes and even to some extent economic changes have been profoundly affected by this acquaintance with the holy scriptures. Mr. Keith Feiling supplies a most pertinent quotation from Selden anent the conflicts of the seventeenth century. 'The wise moderate Puritan, Selden, looking back during the Civil War, put his finger on its real cause. "Scrutamini Scripturas—search the scriptures": these two words have undone the world.'[1] We, looking back from a further distance, may hope and believe that these two words have contributed and are still contributing to the world's remaking rather than to its undoing.

[1] *England under the Tudors and Stuarts*, p. 117.

The anarchical and revolutionary elements in this entrusting of the scriptures to the common people must not be overlooked or denied. We did not, however, have to wait for the Reformation for the scriptures to influence the life of England. We have only to look at the mass of material collected and sifted by Mr. G. R. Owst to see how the medieval pulpit familiarized its hearers with the contents of the scriptures and influenced the life and literature of the people more profoundly than the modern pulpit can hope to do. Neither was the Bible inaccessible in the mother-tongue, nor were all pre-Reformation translations Wycliffite and heretical. But it remains true that only at the Reformation were laymen encouraged to read the scriptures freely and so to form their own judgments. It is also true that only through the Reformation and the Renaissance was the layman enabled to get behind the Vulgate and its limitations, and become acquainted with the original Hebrew and Greek in an English dress. The Bible in Tudor times makes a direct appeal to the heart and mind of England such as it has never been permitted to make before.

When Dr. William Fulke sat down to answer the cavils of Dr. Gregory Martin against Protestant renderings of the scripture, apparently he could plunge at once into detail without feeling obliged to discuss the prior question as to the propriety of translating holy writ into the mother-tongue. But the Rhemish translators had not ignored this prior question, and Thomas Cartwright, at one time Fulke's tutor, in his *Confutation of the Rhemists' Translation*, is at pains to demonstrate the layman's right of free access to the scriptures. The authors of the Douai version state their case with commendable moderation. They suggest that as our Lord spake to some plainly and to others in parables, His oracles can hardly be intended to be broadcast indiscriminately to all. 'How much more may we gather, that all things that be written are not for the capacitie and diet of every of the simple readers, but that very many mysteries of holy writ be very far above their reach and may and ought to be (by as great reason) delivered them in measure and means most meet for them, which in deede can hardly be done, when the whole booke of the Bible lieth before every man in his mother-tongue, to make choice of what he list?' Thomas Cart-

right, the great Puritan leader of the time of Elizabeth, is not erhaps a very attractive figure, but in this controversy his argu- ıent takes on unusual warmth and colour. He admits, of ɔurse, that there are differences in the character of different ortions of the scripture, but these differences do not imply that ɔme portions should be studied only by ministers and scholars, nd the reading of the laity restricted to the plain and simple assages. The fear of God and the intention to do His will are ıe qualifications for profitable study of the Bible, and the mplest believer who has these qualifications will derive in- ruction from difficult passages as surely as the most erudite cholar. 'Christ saith that whosoever will do the will of God, the ıme shall know His doctrine. Seeing, therefore, the people nd unlearned may have as settled a purpose to do the will of od as well as the Pastor or learned, it is evident that their ıbour and travail in reading of the scripture shall be no more ustrate for their estate than the Ministers' for theirs. Likewise ıere being a certain promise that those which abide in the word hich they have believed, shall know the truth, it cannot be, but ıat the people doing that as well as the Minister shall for their roportion be partakers of the promise as well as he.' At this ɔint Cartwright rises to a high level of insight, for he continues : Hitherto belongeth the plaine and most usual words, the phrase nd manner of speech most frequented, the comparisons and militudes most familiar, taken out of the shops, and out of the elds, from husbandry and housewifery, from the flock and from ıe herd, from the Plow and the Mowe. For notwithstanding ıat it had been easy for the Lord by His learned Prophets and postles and our Saviour Christ especially, to have flien up into ıe heavens and to have gone down to hell, for comparisons to t forth His doctrine with, yet we see how He creepeth as it ere upon the ground in taking that which is before men's feet to ear His doctrine with. Wherefore? but that thereby He would otify unto the sons of men that *He wrote the scriptures for the rpacity and understanding of the unlearned*.' Every part of ıe scriptures should then be accessible to every reader. Cart- right will tolerate no Bowdlerized edition of the scriptures. gather he would not have approved of the modern Cambridge ibles for children of various ages. 'Your own Pope saith, that

they (the Scriptures) are like a flood wherein the lamb may wade and the elephant may swim. And if all the scripture carry this light with it, it is clear that every book doth the same. Wherefore also the book of the Canticles of Solomon, intreating of our spiritual conjunction with our Saviour Christ, and that in most chaste and yet familiar speeches, is meet for all ages. We agree that there may be a profitable discretion of reading one book before another and of reading one twice before another once. But for as much as the whole Scripture is a letter sent from the Almighty to His creature, there is no just cause why the book of the Canticles, etc., should be plastered up, that young men and children should not read that part of the letter as well as the rest.'

I must not stay to comment on Cartwright's defence of Canticles, but I may point out that Victorian prudery was not the expression or outcome of the Puritanism of Tudor and Stuart times. Perhaps I may add that the significance of the retention of Canticles in the Canon may lie not in the possibilities of mystical exegesis but in the simple fact that thereby Agape casts her cloak over wayward Eros. I for one am glad that there is erotic poetry in the Bible. But whatever we make of Canticles and of Cartwright's defence of Canticles, he is splendidly right in affirming that God wrote the scriptures for the capacity and understanding of the unlearned.

The open Bible became and has remained the charter of liberty and self-respect for the common man. As such it has proved to be the seed-bed of democracy. Naturally it is the doctrine, the gospel enshrined in the Bible, which sustains our sense of human worth, and not the mere fact that the doctrine is set forth in homely phrase. But it contributes to the ordinary man's self-respect, if he realises that the scriptures have been directed to him, a letter from his Maker, and if the very style in which the letter is couched confirms the realization.

The connection between the Bible and the democratic temper and institutions is too well recognized to need further elaboration, but it may be worth while to recall how familiarity with the Bible lent dignity and point often to Parliamentary and political oratory. Allusions to incidents in or echoes of phrases from the scriptures have often proved a most effective weapon in the Par

amentarian's armoury. As the habit of Bible-reading declines, is weapon is blunted or abused. John Bright's allusion to the ave of Adullam was in its day a most effective hit. At the resent time, it might be as obscure to a public audience as it ems to have been to M. Seignobos. Says Mr. Trevelyan, the rench scientific historian M. Seignobos has thus explained to is fellow-countrymen the strange political term coined by right: 'Allusion à un passage de la Bible. Adullam avait ulu tuer David.' Few moderns could frame or appreciate the gument wherewith John Hampden answered a defender of iscopacy by an apt scriptural reference. The orator had urged ie possibility of promotion to a bishopric as a means of attract-g men of ability to take Orders. 'If any man could cut the oon into little stars, we might still have the same moon or as uch in small pieces, yet we should want both light and influ-nce.' Whereupon Hampden enquired 'what authority there as for supposing that the stars were of less value to God than ie moon—the clergy less useful to the Church than the bishops? nd quoting from the *Book of Revelation*, he reminded the louse of the vision of the perfect Church, the Bride of Christ, ho, clothed with the sun, should have the moon for a footstool, it the stars for a crown about her head.'[2]

If I may interpret 'national life and literature' in the broad rms of the English-speaking union, it may be permissible to ke one further example from the history of the United States. he opening paragraph of the famous speech delivered by braham Lincoln in 1858, wherein he defined the real issue be-re the country, derives its dignity and its force in no small egree from its appeal to a saying of our Lord. The saying is roverbial in character, yet since Christ uttered it, the statesman quoting it is implicitly claiming for his own moral insight the ndorsement of the highest authority. Let me recall the passage.

> 'If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it. We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. "A house divided against

[2] Williamson, *John Hampden*, pp. 276-7.

> itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.' [3]

Who shall say how much has been contributed by the knowledge of the Bible to the political thought and life of English-speaking peoples? Not only elevation of thought and style but firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right may be traced to this source.

When war broke out in 1914, my friend Tom Bryan, the first Warden of Fircroft, reminded me that our scriptures record the experience of a people in a small buffer-state between rival Empires. The position of the little kingdoms of Israel and Judah was very parallel to the position of modern Belgium. It is well that an imperial people like the English should derive their religious faith from a small oppressed folk. While it would be folly to ignore the material considerations and the long political tradition which committed us to defend the independence of Belgium, can it be denied that the Bible itself has fostered in us some chivalrous regard for small nations, especially for such as be oppressed? At least, so long as we read the Bible, we retain an essential safeguard against the perils and temptations of Imperialism. The influence of the scriptures inspires Rudyard Kipling's Recessional. This inspiration is not so clearly discernible in 'Land of Hope and Glory'!

If now we turn from political life to literature, we may note that in both spheres, Protestant bibliolatry had unhappy consequences. That literalism produced evil effects in law and morals cannot be denied, and the treatment of witches may suffice as an example. We must also recognise that a mistaken view of the Bible hindered literary appreciation, stunted the development of taste and creativeness in literature. The mechanical theory of inspiration has proved as fatal to the understanding and enjoyment of the Bible as is a mechanistic philosophy to the

[3] *A. Lincoln, Speeches,* p. 69 (Everyman's Library).

nderstanding and enjoyment of the universe. The very life is ken out of the Bible by commentators who hold a mechanical eory of inspiration, and only those who engage in adult educa-on in the field of Bible-study can realize what an enormous ndicap to the literary appreciation of the scriptures, as well as the spiritual life, the old traditional view of the Bible actually . Occasional affectations like the use of the language of Canaan certain Evangelical circles—an affectation castigated by John oster in a once-famous essay — are as dust in the balance be-de the effect of Bibliolatry in blinding ordinary readers to the erary beauty as well as to the true spiritual nature of the scrip-res. Yet in spite of these drawbacks in popular theology, the nglish Bible, especially the Authorised Version, holds a unique ace and exerts a profound influence in English literature.

I have often wondered that the advocates of the British-raelite theory have not made more of the affinities of the ebrew and English tongues. William Tyndale fastened on is point in defending his work as a translator. He claimed St. erome as his patron, for the Vulgate is a translation of the Bible om the original languages into a mother-tongue. The idea that atin has some peculiar virtue as a medium of translation will ot bear investigation. Tyndale rightly claims that Greek goes well into English as into Latin, and that Hebrew can be ren-ered better in an English version than in a Latin. Here is his gument:

> 'Saint Jerome also translated the Bible into his mother-tongue: why may not we also? They will say it cannot be translated into our tongue, it is so rude. It is not so rude as they are false liars. For the Greek tongue agreeth more with the English than with the Latin. And the properties of the Hebrew tongue agreeth a thousand times more with the English than with the Latin. The manner of speaking is both one; so that in a thousand places thou needest not but to translate it into English, word for word; when thou must seek a compass in the Latin, and yet shall have much work to translate it well-favouredly, so that it have the same grace and sweetness, sense and pure understanding with it in the Latin, as it hath in the Hebrew. A thousand parts better may it be translated into the English than into the Latin.'[4]

Tyndale's argument seems to me incontrovertible. The erary genius certainly of the Old Testament and probably of e New Testament can be preserved and reproduced better in

[4] W. Tyndale, *Doctrinal Treatises*, p. 148 *f.*

an English rendering than in a Latin. The English language and literature can absorb more of the Bible.

In one of the three admirable lectures on 'Reading the Bible,' which Professor Quiller-Couch includes in his volume on *The Art of Reading*, he cites a passage from Matthew Arnold, where the critic points out that 'the effect of Hebrew poetry can be preserved and transferred in a foreign language as the effect of other great poetry cannot.'[5] This is due to the fact that Hebrew poetry depends on parallelism rather than rhyme or metre. Matthew Arnold contends that any foreign language can preserve and transfer the effects of Hebrew poetry, and this no doubt is true, though Tyndale is still justified in claiming some special advantages in the English language. But Hebrew poetry with its parallelism, whenever it is translated, will tend to promote a certain freedom of expression in the foreign medium employed. A certain elasticity will come into a language if it be employed in rendering Hebrew poetry. The language must either develop alternative ways of saying essentially the same thing or fail as a medium of translation. The facility and wealth of expression which characterizes the English language have one source in the preservation and transference of the effects of Hebrew poetry through translation.

'Q'—I refer to Professor Quiller-Couch and not to the Logia document!—is rather severe on metrical and rhyming versions of the Psalms. He thinks Milton's 'Let us with a Gladsome Mind' is to be excused only on the ground that the poet was but fifteen when he wrote it. The Scottish metrical versions Q. would write down as failures, and I suppose few have real literary merit. But we must think twice before we dismiss hymns which are rather re-interpretations of particular psalms than metrical renderings of them. The 23rd Psalm has inspired such great hymns as Sir Henry Baker's 'The King of Love my Shepherd is.' Similarly the 72nd Psalm has given us two magnificent songs in Montgomery's 'Hail to the Lord's anointed, Great David's greater Son,' and Isaac Watts' 'Jesus shall reign where'er the sun.' And if one asks why such hymns cannot be dismissed with Tate and Brady, or Sternhold and Hopkins, it is because they are more than metrical versions of the Psalms

[5] *The Art of Reading*, p. 164.

om which they draw their inspiration. In the light of Christian xperience the original psalms are transposed into a higher key :

'Or if I stray, He doth convert
And bring my mind in frame,
And all this, not for my desert,
But for His holy Name.'

o sings George Herbert, and the later poet follows his example :

'Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
But yet in love He sought me,
And on His shoulder gently laid,
And home rejoicing brought me.'

The source of these verses cannot be found in the original salm. Jesus has put new meanings into the shepherd-simile for ıe Christian, and the Christian poet will outsoar David.

In the same manner, Psalm 72 is transfigured. Montgomery extraordinarily close in thought and language to the original salm, yet the whole is suffused with a strange glory, and the ecret of the transformation is given in the last verse, though it felt throughout. But I am letting myself stray into a by-path. 'he influence of the Bible in hymnology and in devotional oetry is worth analysing, but it may be taken for granted.

To characterize the influence of the Bible on English litera- ıre in general, it may suffice to recall a sentence or two from Q.' 'The Bible,' he says, 'controls its enemy Gibbon as surely s it haunts the curious music of a light sentence of Thackeray's. t is in everything we see, hear, feel, because it is in us, in our lood.'[6] He cites a passage from Cardinal Newman to the same ffect. 'We cannot undo the past. English literature will ever ave been Protestant.'[7] Certainly English literature will ever ave been Biblical.

I am tempted to trace a connection between the Bible and ertain characteristics of English thought. Our readiness for ompromise has been traced by M. Boutmy to the influence of ur climate. As we live under clouded skies and often in a foggy ir, we see nothing clearly and distinctly. But I believe even our eadiness to compromise is bound up with a distrust of abstrac- ons. Perhaps the English are by temperament inclined to be mpiricists rather than rationalists. We prefer the concrete to ıe abstract, and the example to the rule. A telling illustration

[6] *The Art of Reading*, p. 156. [7] *Op. cit.*, p. 141.

means more to us than a logically watertight argument. If this be so, our climate is hardly to blame. Our temperament is more responsible, and our temperamental bias has been reinforced by the Bible. For logic and logical demonstration play little or no part in the religious thought of the scriptures. God is revealed to us in historic events, in personal experiences, and the Bible presents truth to us embodied in a tale. The appeal to the imagination and to feeling is more characteristic of the scriptures than the direct appeal to cold reason. In the Bible the supernatural order impinges on, enters into the natural. This is the life of romance and poetry, particularly of English poetry. The great tradition of English poetry is marked, as a modern critic has observed, by a constant tendency to confuse earth with heaven. Our poets are ever discovering, with Henry Vaughan, 'bright shoots of everlastingness' amid the flux of time. Certainly much of the true greatness of English literature is bound up with the sense of 'something beyond,' and the peculiar sense of 'something beyond,' which constitutes the glory of our achievements in the realms of romance and poetry, could not be derived from a religious philosophy like the Hindu Vedanta, but only from the gospel of God's condescension to us in Jesus. In respect of our national literature, we may say, 'God's gentleness has made us great.'

CHRIST AND CRITICISM

By H. D. A. Major, D.D., F.S.A., Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford.

A MODERN scholar who has contributed three volumes to the subject asserts that the total output of books about esus during the past five years 'would fill several five-foot nelves.' If we extend our retrospect to the last thirty years the roduct is truly enormous. Some of the more scholarly of these olumes are by Conybeare, MacKinnon, Klausner, Goguel, ultmann, Guignebert, Case, Porter, Loisy, Bacon, Burkitt, erguer, Easton. And associated with these solid contributions f research and scholarship are the popular lives of Jesus by ore, Glover, Papini, Middleton Murry, Simkhovitch.

As the assured results of criticism must be for modern men determining factor in their knowledge of Jesus, I am comelled at the outset to attempt the extremely difficult task of ummarizing in a very compressed form the more important of nese critical conclusions.

Th 'Christ-Myth School.'

(1) First there is the Christ-myth school of criticism. It ecame popular in the twentieth century pre-war period. It was xpounded in Germany by Drews, Kalthoff and Jensen; in ngland by the Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson and George Mead; America by W. B. Smith.

In Germany it was disposed of by a galaxy of great German iblical critics headed by von Soden. In England it was hopessly discredited by F. C. Conybeare in his volume *The Hisrical Christ*. In America, Professor Shirley Jackson Case and rofessor Thornburn dismissed it with costs. Its latest exponent France appears to be Ch. Guignebert, who has recently been verely criticized by Professor E. F. Scott.[1]

Nevertheless, having been almost entirely eliminated from ademic lecture halls, the Christ-myth theory survives, and en thrives, in secularist labour circles. It exhibits a variety of rms, but all its exponents are agreed in one conclusion: that ere is no Jesus of history. Not because there was no Jesus, but

[1] *Harvard Theological Review*, Jan. 1934, p. 25*f*.

because He had no history, or rather because we have no history of Him. Our Canonical Gospels are not histories of Jesus in any proper historical sense. The sayings and actions assigned to Him in them are fictitious. A man named Jesus may have existed and have been executed by Pontius Pilate, the Roman Procurator of Judaea, but the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Christian Church and the object of its cultus, is a religious myth and an ecclesiastical legend. These are the conclusions, generally speaking, of the Christ-myth school of critics.

According to this body of critics, Jesus did not create the Christian Church. The Christian Church created Him. This entirely reverses the teaching of our popular hymn, 'The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord,' and perhaps what will seem more serious it also reverses the conviction of the primitive Christian apostle, St. Paul, that 'other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ.'

Inspired possibly by the Greek Mystery Religions, with their 'Saviour Gods' who lived and died and rose again for mankind, the Christian religion thus becomes the product of social conditions, ethical demands, mystical intuitions and aspirations as they operated in Graeco-Roman civilization in the first century of our era. It is not Galilee or Jerusalem, but Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, which are the originating localities of the Christian cultus. These Christ-myth theories must astonish plain readers of the New Testament who believe they find in that volume a wealth of historic evidence for the life and ministry of Jesus. But these people will be told that they are crassly ignorant of the creative power of religious mythical tendencies. Let it be admitted at once that there are mythical elements in our Four Gospels and clear evidences of this myth-creating tendency at work in early Christianity : but this is quite a different thing from believing that the whole Christian religion could have originated in this way.

The French savant who desired to found a new religion, and was told by Talleyrand that if he were to succeed he must first be crucified and rise again the third day, was seriously misinformed. According to the Christ-myth school, all the founder of a new religion requires is to secure a small group of adherents with no sense of factual veracity but possessed of powerful imaginations, dialectical abilities, and an intuitive perception of

ıe social and religious needs of their environment and how to ıtisfy them by the creation of a religious myth — and the feat accomplished.

We are all aware how much great movements and great men ave owed to their environment. Men and movements born be-ore their time perish unknown, not because they lack a sacred ard, but because they have an uncongenial environment. Cer-ıinly the time and place of the Christian religion constituted nportant factors in its success. Harnack's great book *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity* demonstrates this. But ıat will not mean that the Christian Religion did not need a ersonal founder. A supreme personality, and this is pre-minently the case with a moral and spiritual personality, seems ı some mysterious way to inherit, not only all that is most vital ı his ancestry, but also to draw into himself all that is most ital in his contemporary environment. But this is not all. In im all these forces are united in vital union, not in the form of ddition but of multiplication. As a consequence a new moral nd spiritual creation ensues. All the higher religions have had ersonal founders. The highest form of religion is of this ounded religion' type. All that is most vital, original and ıaracteristic in this type of religion is the reflection of the per-ɔnality of its founder, and so the new religion becomes in vary-ıg degree the apotheosis of the personality of its founder. He as created it. It did not create him. Buddhism, Islam, Zoroas-ianism, Confucianism are 'founded religions.' Buddhism was ɔunded by the Buddha, Gautama; Islam was founded by Iohammed; Zoroastrianism by the Persian, Zarathushtra; Con-ıcianism by the Chinese sage, Kung; but not Christianity by esus Christ.

This exclusion of Christianity from the class of 'founded eligions' I cannot, as a student of Comparative Religion, ac-ept. The origin of the Christian religion is most adequately ccounted for by finding both the sower and the seed in the his-ɔric personality of Jesus of Nazareth.

The 'Form-Criticism School.'

(2) Closely akin in its ultimate conclusions to the Christ-yth school, although entirely different in its working hypothesis

and methods, is the Form-criticism school. It is so named to distinguish it from the Source-criticism school, which has achieved such remarkable results. The methods and results of Source-criticism are most adequately presented for English readers in Canon Streeter's monumental work, *The Four Gospels*.

The Form-criticism school makes use of the main results achieved by the Source-criticism school, but it claims to carry back its researches successfully into a much earlier stage in the rise of the Gospel tradition. It is generally accepted that Mark's Gospel was not written until at least a quarter of a century after the Crucifixion of Jesus; the Gospels of Matthew and Luke (in their final form) not until at least half a century after the Crucifixion; and the Fourth Gospel not until nearly three-quarters of a century after the Crucifixion.

Mark's Gospel was thus preceded by a period of oral tradition, in the later part of which period probably *Q* and possibly *Proto-Luke* were composed. This period of oral teaching gave scope for accounts of the activities and teaching of Jesus being shaped and arranged in accordance with the propagandist needs of the primitive Christian missionaries. How these needs or apologetic tendencies operated in the shaping or formation of the Christian tradition can be learnt by a comparative study of the written sources as we have them in the Four Canonical Gospels. The general tendency is to conform Jesus and His acts and teaching, and even His apostles, more and more to the ideals of the Primitive Christian community. Hence historical fact becomes blurred and even lost as the idealizing apologetic tendency prevails both in oral and written tradition.

These conclusions are not peculiar to the Form-criticism school. The researches of the Source-criticism school brought them to light. The particular contribution of the Form-criticism school consists in what may be described as the unstringing, re-arranging and re-threading of the beads which constitute our Canonical Gospels, particularly the Synoptists, and pre-eminently *Mark*. All students of Mark's Gospel recognize that a considerable portion of it consists of little paragraphs (later incorporated into *Matthew* and *Luke*) relating actions and words of Jesus. These are the beads. The string upon which they are strung consists of the chronological succession of these incidents

hich is interwoven with their localization, which consists not erely of the geographical localities associated with incidents id sayings but is supplemented by such further information as n the road,' 'in the boat,' no doubt Peter's, 'in the house,' so Peter's, 'in the mountain,' 'on the beach,' 'in the syna-gogue.'

The Source-critics regarded Mark's string as of supreme alue for the historical understanding of the order of events and e development of the methods of the ministry of Jesus. The orm-critics, for reasons which I cannot give here, regard Mark's ring as of no value at all. On this point I find myself in acute sagreement with the Form-critics.

Having unstrung Mark's beads, the Form-critics examine id classify them according to a theory of literary forms: as gends, paradigms, apophthegms, exhortations, etc. This is a sk of some difficulty, as the beads in some cases are not easily signed to a particular class. The Form-critics then arrange ese various literary forms in a hypothetical chronological suc-ssion which they assume will be the order of the evolution of religious tradition. Having done this they re-string the beads groups in this order, which they claim to be the true order of e beads, in contrast to the order which they have in Mark's ospel. Moreover they do not regard the beads as themselves ing actual reminiscences of the actions and words of Jesus s, for instance, are the sections in the *Memorabilia* of Socrates mpiled by his pupil, Xenophon). The beads are for the Form-tics the creation of the primitive Christian teachers and ssionaries. The primitive Christian leaders skilfully fashioned me of these beads to satisfy the curiosity and devotional and actical needs of the members of the primitive Christian com-unities. Other beads they fashioned to meet their own apolo-tic needs in their work of propaganda, which brought them o conflict with Jewish and pagan opponents.

These beads are thus the creation, very largely, of the oral riod of Christian propaganda which preceded the period of erary tradition which brought our Synoptic Gospels into exist-ce. Our Synoptic Gospels and their literary sources consist nost entirely of collections of these beads. What therefore we ve in these Gospels is very largely fictitious. The order of the

events in the ministry of Jesus has been lost. All we have in its place, and it is supplied to us by the Form-critics, is the order of the growth of the tradition about Jesus, which tradition is not based upon history but is the product of the needs of the Christian community. The practical product of the Form-criticism school is, as I have said, in its ultimate content much the same as that of the Christ-myth school.

Hence our Gospels present us with an interesting picture of the cultus, practice, expectations, beliefs, problems, prejudices of the Christian Church in the second half of the first century but not with any reliable historical account of Jesus Himself. I feel that in the main the high historic value assigned to Mark's Gospel by the Source-critics remains unaffected by the ingenious hypothesis and artificial reconstruction of the Form-critics. Mark's Gospel undoubtedly exhibits apologetic tendencies which are more fully developed in later gospels, but it provides both in its contents, and in the order of events which it relates, a reliable guide to the understanding of the Messianic mission of Jesus.

Erudite and brilliant as are the critics of the Form-criticism school, they fail to convince on the main issue, although on minor issues they contribute not a little that is significant and suggestive.

The Jewish Prophet School.

(3) Another school of critics is convinced that Jesus was a historical personage—a Jew of Palestine, although possibly not of pure Jewish descent, if we accept what are called 'the slanders of the Talmud' and the theories of Mr. Houston Chamberlain and his Teutonic allies.

Nevertheless, Jesus was an absolute Jew in His religion and felt Himself called upon, in the spirit of one of the eighth century prophets (an Amos or a Hosea), to reform that religion. As a consequence He made fierce attacks upon contemporary Judaism and its leaders, and, like other of the goodly fellowship of the Prophets of Israel who had preceded Him, He suffered their fate, but at the hands of the Roman Procurator of Judaea.

Some of His most enthusiastic followers, after His death became convinced that Jesus, the prophet of Galilee, was more than a prophet, and proclaimed their conviction that He was the

essiah, God's Anointed One, the Son of God. This conviction as stimulated, if not originated, by the report of some of His sciples that they had actually seen Him alive after His crucixion. As Professor Shirley Jackson Case of Chicago, the ablest ıd latest exponent of this view, expresses it:

> 'The process of idealization rapidly gathered momentum. Time dimmed historical memories as death removed those who had known Jesus in the flesh.'

nd so Jesus, who had never claimed to be the Messiah, is ralted to God's right hand, and his adoring and expectant nurch awaits His apocalyptic return from heaven with power ıd great glory to be the Judge, as God's vice-gerent, of all ankind.

In all four Canonical Gospels the underlying conviction which ey all preserve is that Jesus undertook His mission simply and lely because He believed Himself to be the Messiah. Although cording to the earliest Gospel (Mark) Jesus kept that convicon in His own breast, and until others had surmised it, He imself would not confess it.

The view that the historic Jesus never claimed to be the essiah seems to us to be open to the fatal objection that it nders His historic ministry inexplicable. If He had claimed be a prophet, and no more than a prophet, why should His ath disillusionize His followers as to the validity of His aim? His fate was only too common in the history of the proıets, but no loyal Jew supposed for an instant that martyrdom scredited either their message or their mission. It was because sus claimed to be Messiah that His crucifixion discredited is claim in the eyes of His disciples and of Judaism generally, ıich claim was only revived as the result of His disciples' exriences both of His resurrection and of the outpouring of His pirit into their hearts.

The Messianic secret with the stages of its unveiling and cognition in *Mark* is so unexpected and so original as to make very difficult to believe that it is not historically true, but is erely a *post mortem* fiction invented by the primitive disciples Jesus. This impression is deepened when we observe the ıdency in *Matthew* to confuse or ignore the stages in the unıiling of the Messianic secret as given by *Mark*. This impresın is strengthened by John's deliberate correction of *Mark* on

this point. Jesus, in the Fourth Gospel, proclaims His Messiahship from the very beginning of His ministry.

We may add that the Messianic conviction of Jesus is enshrined as strongly and clearly in *Q* (the earliest of our literary sources) as it is in *John* (the latest of our Canonical Gospels).

It seems to me that if we are not going to regard, not only our Gospels, but the literary sources they use as unhistorical, we must accept the Messianic consciousness of Jesus as one of the best attested facts we possess in regard to Him. This conclusion in no way contradicts the view that the contemporary Galilaeans regarded Jesus as a prophet and described Him as such. Nor does it contradict the conviction of His very early disciples that He was a Rabbi possessed of extraordinary wisdom originality and insight.

The Eschatological School.

(4) Yet a fourth school of critics concludes that the historical Jesus did claim to be the Messiah and a Messiah of the strictly apocalyptic kind. There seem to have been at least two current and popular conceptions of the Messiahship in existence at this time.

(*a*) The Zealots, a party of fanatical Jewish patriots, expected the Messiah to be a Jew who would claim the Messianic office and as a great political and military leader would deliver Judaism from pagan domination and establish a great Jewish empire on earth. In short, the Messiah was to be the patriotic successor of the Maccabaean princes, but on a vaster scale.

(*b*) The second contemporary view of the Messiah is that He was a pre-existent spiritual Being dwelling in the celestial sphere with the most Ancient of Days, and that at the moment determined by Divine decree He would descend from heaven with legions of angels and archangels and by means of their flaming swords utterly destroy the pagan world, and establish as Jehovah's vice-gerent a Messianic empire on earth which would last a thousand years or more.

This, with variations, is the conception of the Messiahship contained in the Jewish apocalypses, of which the most significant (with the exception of the *Book of Daniel*) was the *Book of Enoch*, written several generations before the birth of Jesus

ıese Jewish apocalypses seem to have gained a wide popu-ity among devout Jews. They were bright tracts for dark ıes, and they gave hope and good cheer to many who through em were led to wait, not to fight with material swords, for the demption of Israel. Jesus is presumed to have been an ardent ıdent of this kind of literature, and so was led to believe Him-lf to be the Messiah, and a Messiah of the Apocalyptic type. ıere are many phrases and passages in the Gospels which indi-te this. Of course we all realize in this year of grace 1934 that ese apocalyptic dreams failed to be realized, both for the Jews d for the Christians. There was no celestial irruption of iritual champions to rescue Judaism from the Roman yoke, to deliver the Christian Church from her pagan persecutors.)th Jew and Gentile, as they looked at the sky, asked : Where the promise of His coming? But no triumphant Messiah scending with His angels from heaven gladdened their sight.

Nearly every eminent New Testament scholar who believes the existence of the historic Jesus and that He claimed to be Messiah, believes that He claimed to be a Messiah of this ictly apocalyptic type. The adherents of this view (and how ny they are), since Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer st presented it, comprise so formidable an array that it must em presumptuous in the highest degree to question the correct-ss of their conclusion. The late Cyril Emmet dared to ques-n it, and by doing so discredited his claim to be a sound New stament scholar.

Is there really no place for a *tertium quid*? Are we abso-ely tied to the view that either Jesus did not claim to be the ssiah at all or else that He claimed to be the Messiah in the ctly apocalyptic sense?

I am myself compelled to hold that there is such a *tertium d*, and that Jesus did claim to be the Messiah but not in the ctly apocalyptic sense. The conclusion that He claimed to the Messiah in a strictly apocalyptic sense seems to me un-vincing, and for the following reasons :

The view that Jesus claimed to be an apocalyptic Messiah kes Him, not an impostor, but a dupe. *Facile decipiens*, *ilius deceptus*, must be the verdict on His Messianic claim. be quite frank, I do not want to think of Jesus as a dupe, nor

do I feel, in view of a number of considerations, that I ought t think of Him as a dupe. Of course, if He was not the Apoca lyptic Messiah it does not follow that He was not a great perso ality utterly sincere and utterly devoted in His obedience t what He believed to be the Divine plan for Him.

In making Jesus claim to be an apocalyptic Messiah we ar depriving Him of originality in the most fundamental elemen of His Gospel. The triple temptation which *Q* described a assailing Him, but which He victoriously vanquished, in H selection of His Messianic ideal becomes meaningless if Jesu took a ready-made ideal of Messiahship from contempora Judaism and made it His own. Instead of confuting the tempte with three quotations from the *Book of Deuteronomy*, Jesu ought to have confuted him with passages from the *Book o Daniel* or the *Similitudes of Enoch.*

Another objection to the conclusion that Jesus regarde Himself as an apocalyptic Messiah is that there are profoun sayings attributed to Him which are not in agreement wi apocalyptic conceptions. The Divine Father of Jesus who Jesus adored is not the avenging Deity of the Apocalyptist The sons of the Kingdom which Jesus proclaimed are not of t seed of Abraham in accordance with the evangel of the apoc lyptists, but are all those who possess the moral and spiritu qualities commended in the Beatitudes.

If there be, on these essential issues, such divergence fr current apocalypticism, why must we assume that the concepti which Jesus held of the Messiahship was strictly apocalyptic It will no doubt be replied: Because there are many sayin attributed to Jesus in the Gospels which make this identificati certain. There are no doubt many such sayings, but can we b sure that they are His? We are quite sure that some of them a not His. Matthew's Gospel, the most Jewish of the Gospel alters passages taken from *Mark* so as to give them an apoc lyptic significance. That Gospel omits non-apocalyptic passag which are found in *Mark*. It also inserts a number of apocalypt passages. That indicates a strong tendency in primitive Jewi Christianity not only to interpret the teaching of Jesus apoc lyptically, but also a tendency to ignore teaching attributed Jesus which conflicted with current apocalyptic beliefs.

Moreover, are there not a number of profound and original
ings of Jesus which are in conflict with these crude apoca-
tic conceptions? And ought we not to regard this non-
calyptic element in the recorded teaching of Jesus as that
ich is essentially His; and the apocalyptic element as having
ne in from contemporary Judaism through John the Baptist
l the early disciples of Jesus, who were all Jews and of the
calyptic kind?

Further, had not the apocalyptic conception of the Messiah-
p, as of the Kingdom and as of the Deity, an apologetic value
the early Christian Church which the more profound spiritual
l moral elements of the teaching attributed to Jesus had not?
here no critical justification for the pre-Schweitzerian Liberal
w that as Jesus filled the current Jewish concepts of the King-
n with a new and original content, so He did also by the
ssiahship?

I would not maintain that no apocalyptic elements are to be
nd in our Lord's original teaching about the Kingdom. Juda-
owed much spiritually to certain elements in Apocalypticism,
l these, there is good reason to believe, Jesus retained and
luded: but those aspects of apocalyptic teaching which ex-
ience has shown to be false and futile, I am unable, in view
he conflicting character of the evidence, to regard as part of
original Gospel of Jesus. Genius is more prone to create
n to borrow, to strike out new paths for itself rather than to
low pedestrians on the highway; and Jesus has claims, al-
ugh there are many who would deprive Him of every element
riginality, to be regarded as a supreme moral and spiritual
ius. Jesus, to cite Harnack's phrase, is not only above the
ds of His reporters, but He is also above the heads of His
dern critics.

There is one contributor, however, to the pages of the New
stament who did not take the apocalyptic view either of the
gdom or of the Messiahship of Jesus. I refer, of course, to
author of the Fourth Gospel. He identified the Kingdom
n eternal life to be entered into here and now, and the
ssiahship of the Kingdom he identified with the mission of
Life-giver:

'I am come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.'

How far he was historically justified in this view is no easy question to answer, but I am drawn to think that he had a more profound understanding of the essential teaching of Jesus than had those primitive Jewish disciples who are reported to have asked Jesus on the occasion of His ascension :

> 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?'

The Death of Jesus.

The many critical problems arising out of the Gospel narratives of the birth, miracles, resurrection and ascension of Jesus do not come within the scope of my paper. It is otherwise with the death of Jesus.

Dr. Eisler's widely-circulating volume, *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist* (New York, Eng. Tr., 1931), which propounds the thesis that an early Russian translation of the original draft of the work of Josephus' *History of the Jewish War*, throws important light, by the additional matter it contains, on the origins of the Christian movement. Jesus, it would seem, according to this view, was not guiltless of harbouring dreams of a political revolutionary kind akin to those of the Zealots. His crucifixion between two of the revolutionaries was therefore not so inappropriate as it has hitherto seemed to us. It is possible that some of the disciples of Jesus, as the incident of the two swords in *Luke* suggests, believed in Zealot methods; but there is no convincing evidence that Jesus did. His entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday symbolized His coming as the Prince of Peace. His dictum, 'they that take the sword shall perish by the sword,' is directed against the Zealot propaganda, as are also His pacific exhortations to submit to the oppressive exactions and even injustices of government officials.

Professor Creed, in an able article in the *Harvard Theological Review* for October 1932, would seem to have given Professor Eisler's ingenious and erudite theories the *coup de grâce*. In the article to which we refer, Dr. Creed shows, with a high degree of probability, that where the Slavonic Josephus deviates from the received text of Josephus the variants are worthless and have no sound claim to be regarded as genuine.

Sceptics have asserted that the only Article in the Christian Creed which it is possible to accept is that which states that

sus was crucified under Pontius Pilate. Nevertheless there is ll much debate as to why He was crucified. Was He crucified luntarily, and if so what significance and value did He attach His death for the purpose of His Messianic mission? To me seems clear that the death of Jesus was voluntary; that He nt up to Jerusalem expecting to die. The fate of many of the eat prophets of Israel, the death of John the Baptist, the lot the Suffering Servant in the Second Isaiah, the growing hosty of the religious and political authorities of His nation all inted to the inevitability and the appropriateness of His own ath. But why in Jerusalem?

It is said that the late Marshal Foch, when a professor at a litary academy, used to propound to his pupils this problem: hen the enemy are in overwhelming force in front, and both ur flanks are in the air and you are without reserves, what ust you do — surrender or retreat? Neither. You must adnce with all your forces and strike at the enemy's centre.

This was the situation of Jesus. Defeated in Galilee, atked on both flanks by the religious and political authorities of s nation, He must either take to flight or surrender, or advance Jerusalem. It was a forlorn hope, but the alternatives were death or victory, but victory through death. For one brief riod in Gethsemane, Jesus was almost overwhelmed by the rkness and horror of the situation, but recognizing His ther's hand in it He was able to say 'Thy will be done.' And after confessing His Messiahship to the Sanhedrin, He died iberately and as Messiah, rejected by Judaism.

He might so easily have been got out of the way or been pressed on some minor charge. That is the real danger which eatens the martyrs and heroes of every great cause. Jesus l the supreme satisfaction of dying for that for which He had ed — His Messianic claim. It was on that claim that His urch was founded after His death in Jerusalem, and it was thin red line of the Messiah's blood which separated that urch from Judaism. Only by His death could His Gospel mph. The view that He died as a propitiatory sacrifice for sins of His nation or for the sins of mankind, which was the w of St. Paul and of many others in the Primitive Christian urch, cannot be convincingly attributed to Jesus Himself,

and neither *Q*, *Proto-Luke* nor *Mark* contain any teaching which identifies the death of Jesus with a propitiatory sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. He died as Messiah; He did not die as a propitiatory sacrifice; He died on behalf of the many who were to come unto God through Him.

Two Conflicting Tendencies.

I now proceed to note very briefly two apparently conflicting tendencies in modern criticism. The first is to stress more and more strongly the full humanity of Jesus — not simply the richness and tenderness and insight of His human sympathy, but also His various human limitations; physical and mental. Gore's doctrine of the *Kenosis* sought to justify these human limitations theologically.

The second tendency is to stress the strangeness of Jesus. He is the 'enigma of the centuries.'

> 'He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old by the lake-side He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word, "Follow thou me!" and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfil for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, and conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is.'

This famous passage with which Schweitzer concludes *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* has had many imitators among those less gifted as critics and writers.

This most modern tendency to regard Jesus as the Great Unknown is partly the product of reaction, possibly even of scepticism and disillusionment. The elder generation of Gospel critics were perhaps too much at ease in Zion. Weinel asked: Do we know Jesus? And had no hesitation in replying: Yes, we know Him very well indeed.

Loisy's attack on the Jesus of Liberal Protestantism was not without some justification, although the replacement of the Liberal Protestant Jesus, first by the Apocalyptic Jesus and then by the Christ who is identified with the Catholic Church, led Loisy to renounce both his Christianity and his Catholicism. But then Loisy is a logical Frenchman.

This stress upon the unknown Jesus which gives freedom to critics to assess His personality at every valuation ranging from

ero to infinity is to-day appropriately united to the Barthian eology, which proclaims as the supreme article of its faith the nknown God whose only undoubted attribute is His 'other- ess.' The doctrine of an unknown God and an unknown essiah reflects not only the modern flight from reason but also e modern flight from faith, and I believe also from sound New estament criticism. Yet there is a lesson to be learnt from this. is contained in the warning of a modern critic: We must seek become the contemporaries of Jesus, we must not seek to make im our contemporary.

It is the task of Gospel Criticism to make ourselves the con- mporaries of Jesus: to see Him as He really was in the full- ess and circumstances of His humanity. Our Lord was not a odern man, although the spirit and principles which proceed om Him are ever new in their creative and transforming power. ence I am not able to regard His ethical teaching as an nterims-Ethik.

The ethic of Jesus in its underlying principles (not neces- rily in every occasional utterance attributed to Him) is uni- rsal and eternal as the late Dr. Rashdall has shown in his *onscience and Christ*.

The Originality of Jesus.

Gospel Criticism has much to say as to the originality of sus. The Gospel dicta: 'What is this? A new teaching? ever man spake as this man'—have been taken to refer, not the content, but to the manner of His teaching. Many things ich used to be supposed to be original in the teaching of Jesus e now shown to be derived from contemporary Judaism. Were ere then no original elements in His teaching? Yes, there were me: notably His view about miracles: also about forgive- ss: also about little children: but we may not dwell on these. arnack has said: What is most remarkable about the religion Jesus is not what He includes in it but what He excludes from The originality of Jesus is seen in two things pre-eminently:) in the originality of His selection, (2) in the way in which e filled old terms with new meanings. And yet that is not all. sus speaks of the new wine. This was not so much new teach- g as a new spirit.

And now one word more. It is a word of criticim directe against some of the critics.

Renan has said that truth lies concealed in *les nuances*, an it is certainly the duty of the literary and historic critic to find there. But if he only finds truth there, just as much as if he fail to find it there, he has come short in the fulfilment of his task.

The defender of Archbishop Laud against the charge of Hig Treason maintained that a hundred black hairs do not make on black horse. And it is equally true that a hundred discrepancie in the evidence of witnesses does not necessarily deprive thei evidence of all truth. Yet this assumption seems to underlie s many of the conclusions of our critics. A great judge, in contra to a pettifogging attorney, is able to get at the truth behind th contradictions because he possesses not only a much wider rang of general culture, but also a much deeper and more sympathet understanding of human nature. Yet it is the spirit of the atto ney rather than that of the judge which seems too often t dominate the conclusions of some New Testament critics. The basis of judgment is too narrow. They seem to have so lit understanding of human nature, Comparative Religion and th forces which mould human history.

In the opening of this paper I stated that knowledge of th assured results of criticism is an important factor in our kno ledge of Jesus, but it is only *one* of the factors in the knowled of Him. It is most important that this should be realise Besides the critical knowledge of Jesus there is the influence o the spirit and ideals of Jesus upon our Western civilizatio This does not come within the purview of New Testament criti cism, yet it provides a very important element in assisting us t estimate the essential significance of Jesus. It is to Him we ow the axiom : 'A tree is known by its fruit.'

MODERN CRITICISM AND THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

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NOTHING has happened during the last ten years to shake our confidence in the main conclusions already ached by New Testament criticism by the first decade of the esent century in regard to the relations of the first three Gos- ls. These, I may remind you, are as follows:

(1) Mark is the oldest of the Gospels, and is the source from ich Matthew and Luke derived the greater part of the strictly rrative portion of their respective Gospels.

(2) Matthew and Luke have in common (in addition to what ey derive from Mark) material to the amount of about a couple hundred verses, mainly consisting of sayings of Christ. The nplest explanation of this phenomenon is that the authors of ese Gospels found this material in a written document which, ough the tradition of the sayings must originally go back to amaic, lay before them *in the Greek language*. This presumed cumentary source is commonly referred to as 'Q.'

(3) There is some overlapping as between Mark and 'Q'; overlapping extends to about fifty verses in Mark. Where s happens, the Markan version is nearly always shorter and s original-looking. A natural inference is that 'Q' is of earlier te than Mark; but whether or no Mark had read 'Q' (or per- ps its Aramaic source or sources) is still an open question.

I have said that nothing has happened to shake our confi- nce in the above conclusions; I do not say that nobody has estioned them. A few attempts to do so have been made; but ese, so it appears to me, do more credit to the ingenuity than the commonsense of their authors; and none of these attempts ve commended themselves to any wide acceptance among ose who have seriously studied the subject. I am not suggest- g that the conclusions I have just summarized have the cer-

tainty of a mathematical demonstration. They have not; but in only two regards do they require stating with any real reserve. (1) Though there is no reasonable doubt that Matthew used Mark in substantially its present form, a plausible case can be stated for the view that what Luke used was, not our Mark, but an earlier and somewhat shorter edition of Mark. No one can finally disprove the existence of such an 'Ur-Marcus'; but the pros and cons for that hypothesis (in many and various forms) have been discussed for fifty years, and the balance of probability remains decidedly against it. (2) No one can rule out the possibility that the material which critics assign to the document 'Q' may have been derived from more than one document, or partly from a document, partly from stereotyped oral tradition. But here again it is illegitimate to prefer a complicated to a simple explanation, except where the probabilities are decidedly in its favour; and this seems to be the case only in regard to that small minority of passages where the Matthean and Lukan versions of a logion differ very widely.

Ten years ago, in my book *The Four Gospels*, I ventilated what I called 'A Four Document Hypothesis.' I coined the phrase mainly as a protest against an implication commonly supposed to inhere in the generally-accepted 'Two Document Hypothesis'—the implication, namely, that if an item cannot be referred either to Mark or to 'Q,' its attestation is necessarily of a far lower order. This implication frequently led to an unscientific disparagement of the characteristic material in the Gospel of Luke. This characteristic material is in extent considerably greater than 'Q,' and includes sayings and parables quite as important as anything in 'Q' for the interpretation of the mind of Christ. What an impoverishment of our knowledge of that mind would result if we lacked the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, and the Pharisee and the Publican —which Luke alone records! Again, the parables and discourse material found only in Matthew, though not quite so extensive or important as that which is peculiar to Luke, nevertheless constitutes a source of our knowledge of the teaching of Christ only a little less important than 'Q' or the matter peculiar to Luke. The main point, however, that I was concerned to assert was not so much that there were four precisely definable documents

ut that *at least four* independent sources of high value (more robably written than oral) were made use of by Matthew and uke.

Luke's account of the Last Supper and of the Passion differs om Mark's much more widely than does Matthew's account; uke also gives versions of certain incidents found in Mark, ich as the Rejection at Nazareth, the Call of Peter, and the nointing, which have striking differences from the Markan ver- on. Hence we cannot avoid raising the question whether Luke here making use of a source or sources other than Mark, or hether he is freely re-writing what he found in Mark. It is ob- ious that his credit as a historian will vary a great deal accord- g to the answer which we give to this problem. For that reason e Proto-Luke theory which I put forward in that same book as, if correct, an important bearing on the historical value of e third Gospel.

On the Proto-Luke theory, either Luke himself, or someone hose work Luke used, started off with a copy of 'Q' and pro- eeded to enrich this, partly by adding a few stories, including ersions of the above (derived not from Mark but from oral adition), Martha and Mary, the Samaritan Lepers, etc., and ore particularly by adding an account of the Last Supper and assion. This document (which would be of about the same ngth as Mark) was already in his hands when he first came cross a copy of Mark; he then proceeded to incorporate about vo-thirds of Mark's Gospel as a further enrichment of it — no oubt modifying both sources in minor details so as to make the hole a literary unit.

The Proto-Luke theory has met with a wide acceptance nong English scholars. In particular it has been taken up and mplified by Dr. Vincent Taylor. In certain ways he has forti- ed the arguments for it; though, to the mind of some critics, he as weakened the case in its larger issues by over-elaboration of oints of detail. At any rate, it is my own statement of it, not his, at I am prepared to defend. Its most redoubtable opponent is rof. J. M. Creed of Cambridge, who, in his recent Commentary n St. Luke, dismisses it in a footnote. But his criticisms do not ppear to me to affect the main substance of my argument. I ad described Proto-Luke as being 'a kind of half-way house

between collections of sayings, like "Q," and the biographical type of Gospel of which Mark was the originator.' Professor Creed objects: 'the subtraction (from Luke) of Marcan material leaves an amorphous collection of narrative and discourse.' This amorphousness (if I may coin a word), so far from being a valid objection, is exactly what we should expect *at that date*. The document Q, it is evident, was an amorphous collection rather like the Book of Jeremiah. As I have already said, I conceive the author of Proto-Luke (whether he be Luke himself or a previous worker) to have started off with the document Q; he enriched it with a few stories and a number of sayings and parables which had come to his knowledge: he also added to it an account of the Passion and of the Appearances after the Resurrection. The result would be a document which would be a half-way house between Q and Mark. But that is exactly the kind of document we should have expected *somebody* sooner or later to produce. The Jews were interested in, and recorded, the teaching of their Prophets and Rabbis; they were curiously uninterested in their biographies. Thus Q is exactly the kind of document that one would expect to be produced by Jewish Christians in the earliest period. On the other hand, the Gentile world was interested in biographies. Hermippus of Alexandria wrote the lives of the Greek philosophers, persons who in the Greek world held a position comparable to that of Prophets or Rabbis in the Jewish; and the end of the first and beginning of the second centuries A.D. produced an outcrop of biographies which still survive — Suetonius' Lives of the Caesars, Tacitus' Life of Agricola, and the Lives of Plutarch, not to mention that of a religious leader like Apollonius of Tyana. The Gospel of Mark is clearly a reply to this Gentile demand for biography. Proto-Luke, which is Q expanded in a biographical direction, is a movement in the direction of supplying that demand, but, doubtless for lack of suitable material, its author was unable to go the whole way.

Heretofore students of the Synoptic Problem have thought of Mark as the primary source into the framework of which Matthew and Luke fitted material derived from other sources; and this way of looking at it is quite satisfactory so far as Matthew is concerned. So far, however, as Luke is concerned, the

roto-Luke theory involves a 'Copernican revolution,' on a nall scale, in asserting that this expanded version of Q was re-ırded by the editor of the third Gospel as his primary source; conceives him as expanding Proto-Luke by inserting extracts om Mark rather than *vice versa*. To this Professor Creed ob-cts that the *framework* of our Gospel of Luke is undoubtedly erived from Mark. If by 'framework' is meant biographical ıtline, this of course is true of all that intervenes between the rmon at Nazareth, with which Luke opens the public ministry, ıd the Last Supper. Proto-Luke contains so little narrative at, if Luke wanted to produce anything like a biography, he as obliged to take the narrative outline from Mark. The sur-ising thing, however, is that whenever he has parallel material Proto-Luke he prefers *its order* to that of Mark; indeed, nenever Luke gives a version of an incident or saying which is variant of the version found in Mark, he *always* gives it in a ntext other than that in which it occurs in Mark. That is to y, even in a matter of narrative order, he seems to prefer the n-Marcan to Mark's wherever that is possible. So too in e account of the Passion, as Sir John Hawkins pointed out in *orae Synopticae*, he modifies the order in Mark no less than elve times; which is easily explicable if he was following the der of a parallel source which he was conflating with Mark.

I may mention here a small point the significance of which I ve only recently noticed. The message of the Angel at the mb as recorded by Mark is, 'He goeth before you into Gali-e; there shall ye see him as he said unto you' (Mk. xvi, 7). ıke alters this to 'Remember how he spake unto you when he ıs yet in Galilee' (Lk. xxiv, 6). The reason for this altera-n is that the Resurrection Appearances which he is about to cord are represented as taking place in Jerusalem, whereas se contemplated by Mark appear to be in Galilee. Luke was re faced with a conflict of authorities; to make a consistent ry he must choose the one he thought correct and alter the ner to bring them into agreement. He chooses the non-arcan, and deliberately modifies Mark in order to adapt it to e non-Marcan version. Surely, if he had been merely fitting id traditions into the framework of Mark, it would have been ese that he would have modified, rather than a more or less

authoritative written document like Mark. On the other hand on the Proto-Luke theory, he is altering Mark to make it fit in with a written document of about the same length, which, perhaps merely because it was more familiar to him, he considered to be (where they differed) the superior authority.

Luke was no mere operator with scissors and paste; he was a supreme literary artist. I am quite ready, therefore, to allow to Prof. Creed that some of the notices of movement which have caused some people to give to the central section of the Gospel (Lk. ix, 51—xviii, 14) the absurd name 'travel document' were introduced by the last editor to make his extracts from Proto-Luke run on better with narrative sections taken over from Mark. Again, though Luke, unlike Matthew, in general avoids conflating his sources, he would not have regarded conflation as a deadly sin which he had taken a vow to shun; where he thought it an improvement he would not hesitate to introduce a sentence from Mark (*e.g.* Lk. iii, 3) into a section from Proto-Luke.

An incidental advantage of the Proto-Luke theory is that its acceptance would finally demolish that bugbear of criticism, the Ur-Marcus theory. For the Proto-Luke theory makes it easy to explain Luke's 'great omission' of the long section Mark vi, 45—viii, 26, which is the only serious difficulty in accepting the view that Luke used our Mark. Sir John Hawkins, in the *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, showed that in style and vocabulary this section of Mark was, if possible, more Marcan than Mark himself. It is also clear that at any rate part of this section (the story of the Walking on the Water) was in John's copy of Mark as well as in that used by Matthew; and, as I have shown elsewhere, the intrusion in Lk. ix, 10, of the name Bethsaida, which occurs twice in the omitted section, shows that at least *some part* of that section was also in the copy used by Luke. Further, it has often been pointed out that reasons are not far to seek why most of the material in this section should have seemed to Luke to be not specially valuable. Nevertheless many scholars find it hard to believe that Luke could have intentionally omitted so large a section if it had stood in his main authority. But suppose Luke did not regard Mark as his main authority. Suppose he regarded himself, not as producing an amplified edition of Mark, but rather as expanding Proto-Luke

as to make it into a literary biography by incorporation of ge extracts from Mark. In that case his procedure ceases to remarkable. Psychologically, it is one thing to omit a large tion from a main authority; it is quite another to refrain from luding a particular section among a number of extracts which e is making from a particular document.[1]

We ask then, whether, in cases where Mark and Proto-Luke fered, Luke was right in preferring Proto-Luke. On the ole, where they differ, Mark's version looks the better. But it a confusion of thought to say that Proto-Luke must therefore of later date than Mark. If Proto-Luke is regarded as being, to speak, a first draft by Luke himself, it consists of 'Q' plemented by material which he picked up in Palestine, stly at Caesarea, during the two years when he was there in company of Paul. Now it belongs to human nature to suppose that a story one has picked up on the spot, as the result of e's own investigations, is more reliable than something one nes across afterwards in a book by somebody else. Thus any ries which Mark derived directly from Peter—for example, account of the Call of Peter—would inevitably be nearer original facts than versions of the same incidents which ke had picked up at second hand in Caesarea; yet Luke, ecially if he actually wrote down his version at a date earlier n that at which the Gospel of Mark was composed, might well efer his own version.

For these and other reasons the lapse of time has enhanced belief that the Proto-Luke theory, in some form or other, is the right lines. I do not wish to discuss here another hypothesis which I myself put forward; the hypothesis, namely, that bulk of the discourse and parable material in Matthew, inding in particular the sayings of a Judaistic character, were ived from a single written source which might be called 'M.' e hypothesis has been adopted by Mr. T. W. Manson in his portant work *The Teaching of Jesus*, and has commended lf to certain other scholars of distinction. But although I still

[1] This argument (combined with further reflection on Luke's method intention as derived from the whole Gospel and Acts) inclines me to e up the idea, favourably considered in my book *The Four Gospels*, that section had been accidentally lost from the MS. of Mark which was d by Luke.

adhere to it, I fully concede that the case for it is nothing like so strong as that for the Proto-Luke theory.

I ought now to mention some recent attempts to get behind the documents (whether two, three or four) which criticism has so far succeeded in isolating. I will first say something about attempts, originating in this country, to get back behind documents like 'Q' and 'M,' which are mainly authorities for the teaching of Christ; I must then give a glance at the school of German criticism which is mainly concerned to get behind Mark.

Some of my hearers may have seen an article which I contributed to the *Hibbert Journal* of October, 1933, under the title 'Poems of Jesus.' This was, in effect, an attempt to apply the conception of *pattern* or, as the Germans would say 'form,' to the unravelling of the critical problems presented by the oral tradition *prior* to the documentary sources of the Gospels, but to do so in a way entirely different from that which is being explored by the method of *Formgeschichtliche*, or 'Form criticism,' in Germany. I may be permitted to recall and develop some of the points set out in that article.

Movements which originate on the Continent often so agitate the minds of English people as to cause an undue neglect of home production. And particularly in the field of theology German scholarship is unusually successful in monopolizing the shop-window. A conspicuous instance of this has occurred of late in regard to the critical study of the life and teaching of Christ. New Testament scholars are everywhere writing and talking about *Form-criticism*. Discussion of results and methods of this school of German writers has distracted the attention of English and America scholars from the to some extent parallel —and to my mind more fruitful—line of investigation suggested by the late Professor C. F. Burney in his posthumously published work *The Poetry of our Lord* (Oxford, 1925).

No one who has the slightest literary feeling can fail to recognize in the words of Jesus, even in an English dress, the quality of great poetry. Burney was, I believe, the first to be at the pains to work out elaborately a scientific basis for this instinctive recognition. This he does by relating the sayings of Christ recorded in the Gospels to the results of recent research into the forms and rhythms of Hebrew poetry. Like the German

rm-critics, he sees in *pattern* an implement of the first im-
rtance for Gospel criticism; but he uses it in a different field,
d that one which in many respects is more congenial to its use.
ıe salient feature in Hebrew poetry is *parallelism* in thought,
mbined with *rhythm* (as distinct from *metre*) in the expression.
ıe parallelisms tend to fall into three main patterns. Most of
e sayings of Christ (apart from the parables) can be classed
rmally as 'parallelisms' of one or other of these patterns.
ıis fact, once it is pointed out, is obvious even in the English
nslation. By re-translating the sayings into Aramaic, Burney
ds that the specifically Hebrew rhythms are there also. Re-
nslation must always be a highly conjectural process; more-
er, the nature of certain Hebrew rhythms is a question on
ich there is difference of opinion. Nevertheless, even if a
y per cent. reduction be made on these counts, the proposi-
n holds that a large part of the teaching of Christ is expressed
the forms or in the rhythmical cadences of Hebrew poetry.

Granted this proposition, there follows in strict logic an im-
rtant conclusion. Poetry implies a poet; but no one but the
et himself can remember a poem of any length unless it has
en either written down by the poet or has been repeated by
ı in identical words often enough for the hearer to learn it by
ırt. So far as I know, the first person who has not only seen
s obvious conclusion but has had the courage to draw out its
l consequences is Canon J. M. C. Crum, in a book which curi-
sly mixes original research with ultra-popular presentation,
e Original Jerusalem Gospel (Constable, 1927).

> 'Words so deliberately wrought into a form would easily live in men's memories. The maker (not to say 'poet') of words so chosen would, for example, have satisfied himself that they were the words He wanted. He could have said them again and again without a change. I believe that He did so deliberately repeat them until hearers had them by heart. His would be a school without school-books. He gave to His disciples these Sayings to remember' (*op. cit.*, p. 47).

The fundamental importance for the criticism of the Gospels
the point here raised has only gradually come home to my
ıd. But the more I reflect on it, the clearer it becomes that,
ereas a short epigram of the proverb type may be remem-
ed by a person who has heard it only once, a long and
ınected passage can only be accurately recollected if it is
eated several times in the same form of words. Moreover,

learning by heart by means of such repetition played a predominant part in ancient methods of education. Thus an Egyptian definition of a school-fellow is 'one with whom thou has chanted the writings.' An account of Accadian instruction represents the pupil as sitting at the feet of the teacher, whilst the subject-matter is dealt with by question and answer, and special emphasis is laid on learning by heart.[2] The Buddha wrote nothing; he summarized the main points of his teaching in sayings, such as the Four Noble Truths, which are intentionally formulated in a way easy to be learnt by heart. In India, China and Egypt the practice has lasted down to our own times. Similarly, among the pre-exilic Hebrews, it was an exceptional circumstance deserving mention when Isaiah committed a testimony in writing (viii, 1 and 16; xxx, 8). Again, it is evident that Jeremiah was able to reproduce from memory, and to dictate to Baruch, his past oracles extending over twenty years (xxxvi, 2 *ff.*). So in later Judaism the very name 'Mishnah,' meaning 'repetition,' reminds us that the Rabbinical method of teaching the oral tradition was by repetition. The burden of proof, then, lies with any who would maintain that Jesus did *not* follow the methods of teaching universally employed in the East.

Further, we have definite evidence that on at least one occasion He *did* employ this method; for the Lord's Prayer, Luke tells us, was originally what we might call a 'dictated' piece. Jesus was asked, 'Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples' (Lk. xi, 1). He replied, 'When ye pray say, Father, hallowed be thy name,' etc. More than a single repetition would be required if they were to memorize this form of words, even in the shorter version given by Luke.

The problem of memory implied in the existence of the longer discourses of Jesus is one which, I confess, I have till lately tried to solve on the hypothesis that these were formed by 'aggregation' from a large number of originally separate epigrams — each of which represented the one or two sayings which alone from some longer sermon or discussion had happened to stick in the memory of the hearers. Undoubtedly a critical study of parallel passages in the Gospels shows that

[2] Dürr, *Das Erziehungswesen im Alten Testament und im antiken Orient.* p. 22 and p. 72.

regation into long discourses of sayings originally separate
process that has actually been at work, more especially in
tthew;[3] but when all possible allowance has been made for
process, there remain cases where the irreducible unit
ched by critical analysis of a discourse is much too long for
o have been remembered at all unless it had been several
es *repeated in identical form.* It is no use to invoke in ex-
nation 'the tenacity of the oriental memory'; the oriental
nory is tenacious, and, as I have already stressed, in the
ools at Jerusalem of old, as still in Egypt, India and China,
cation largely consisted in training to learn by heart. But
average oriental, like other men, can learn by heart only
ough repetition; but the wording of the thing to be learnt
st have assumed an exact and fixed form *before* that kind of
etition can begin. As an example, take the long passage
ch occurs with almost verbal identity in both Matthew and
e, and which must certainly be assigned to Q. I give it in
tthew's version:

'Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you' (Mt. vi, 25-22).

re is one short sentence in this section, 'which of you by
g anxious can add one cubit to his stature' (Mt. vi, 27 = Lk.
25), which may once have been a separate saying that has
attracted in oral tradition to the longer discourse through
occurrence of the word 'anxious.' Apart from this single
e, the passage forms an articulated whole. It cannot be ex-
ned as an agglomeration, built up of what were originally

[3] See my *Four Gospels*, 261 *ff.*

short proverb-like sayings. But the passage as a whole bears th hall-mark of authenticity; it is not only sublime poetry, it is th expression of religious genius. It is, however, far too long t have been memorized unless it had been repeated several time in identical words by Christ Himself.

But note. The original poem must have been even longe than the passage I have just read (Mt. vi, 25-33 = Lk. xii, 22-31 The emphatic 'Therefore' (διὰ τοῦτο) with which it opens occu *both* in Matthew's version and in Luke's, and so must hav stood in the source (presumably Q) which they here reproduc But a 'therefore' is meaningless unless there has been a prev ous statement to which what follows is related as conclusion t premise. This premise, I suggest, is preserved in a passag given by Matthew a few verses earlier:

> 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where mo and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal; b lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor r doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: f where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also' (Mt. vi, 19-21).

This saying certainly stood in 'Q' in the closest connection wi the Poem we are considering, for Luke also has it — only in variant form, and standing as the *conclusion* of the Poem. Luke it reads:

> 'Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to g you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; make for yo selves purses which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fail not, where no thief draweth near, neither moth destroyeth. For whe your treasure is, there will your heart be also' (Lk. xii, 32-34).

It is usually inferred that the saying stood in 'Q,' but tha it has been *transposed* (as well as partly re-written) *either* b Matthew *or* by Luke. This I suggest is a misapprehensio Once we recognize that we are studying a poem, we are awake t the fact that poetry admits the recurrent refrain. How muc more effective the saying becomes if we suppose that in th original poem it occurred twice, at the beginning and at the end as a varying refrain. The poem would have begun, as in Mat thew's version, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon th earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieve break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures i heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and wher thieves do not break though nor steal, for where thy treasure i

re will thy heart be also.' It continued, 'Therefore, I say o you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat,' etc., birds, the lilies, and 'seek first His Kingdom.' It ended, as Luke's version, 'Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's od pleasure to give you the Kingdom. Sell that ye have, and e alms; make for yourselves purses which wax not old, a asure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief draweth ır, neither moth destroyeth. For where you treasure is, there l your heart be also.' Thus the end of the poem was a refrain ich echoed, rather than exactly repeated, its opening words. e compilers of our Gospels used 'Q' in a Greek translation; s concealed from them the fact that they were dealing with a em. In prose a refrain may well seem an unnecessary repeti-n, so Luke omitted it on its first occurrence, Matthew on its ond.

The refrain, it is hardly necessary to recall, is a character-c feature of Hebrew prophecy and poetry. Thus in Isaiah we d, occurring four times at a regular interval, the sentence, or all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is etched out still' (Is. ix, 12, 17, 21; x, 4). Again, the refrain is frequent occurrence in the Psalms: 'Why art thou cast down, ny soul, and why art thou disquieted within me . . .' (Ps. xlii, 1; xliii, 5. Ps. xlii and xliii were originally one psalm).

A more complicated example — important as affording an ılogy to the variation in the Matthean and Lucan versions of saying about treasure in heaven — is found in Psalm cvii. re we have, four times repeated (Ps. cvii, 6—8, 13-15, 19-21, 31), a rather lengthy refrain of three or four verses in which first and last verse are always the same (or practically the ne), but the intervening verse or verses of the refrain are, in h case, quite different. The verse, 'Then they cried unto the rd in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their dis-sses,' is followed by varying matter; then comes, 'Oh that n would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonder-works to the children of men.'

There is another instance in the Sermon on the Mount, where presence of a refrain helps us to recover a more original ıngement in the teaching of Christ. The refrain, 'Thy Father ch seeth in secret shall recompense thee,' occurs *three* times

(Mt. vi, 4, 6, 18); it points the characteristic emphasis in Christ's teaching in regard to the *three* religious practices specially stressed in Jewish teaching, *viz.* almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. The section Mt. vi, 7-15 (since it has to do with prayer) has been brought by the editor from another source, or from another context in the same source. Without this interpolation, the three injunctions are of approximately equal length, and each naturally leads up to the refrain. Here, again, critical analysis leaves us with an original unit (Mt. vi, 2-6, 16-18) far too long to be learnt by heart unless it had been several times repeated by Christ Himself to the disciples *in identical form.*

Following this line of thought, it would seem probable that the nucleus of the document 'Q' was a collection of separate 'Poems of Jesus,' which had been given by Him *as such* to the disciples to be learnt by heart. Much of the discourse matter also that is peculiar to Matthew will consist of similar poems which were either not included in 'Q' or which (though included there) were omitted by Luke.

Why is it, we may ask, that recent criticism has made so little use of the tool thus presented to it for the recovery of the actual *ipsissima verba* of Christ? The answer, I think, is that Dr. Burney made too great claims for it. Discoverers, like parents, are apt to over-estimate the abilities of their own children. Dr. Burney seems to suggest that any passages in the Gospels in which can be traced the parallelisms or rhythms of Hebrew poetry must be at once pronounced authentic. And he was ready to push this conclusion so far as to cover the actual wording of the discourses of the Fourth Gospel, on the ground that, when translated (or 'retranslated,' as he called it) into Aramaic, they fell naturally into the pattern of Hebrew poetry.

Dr. Burney did not allow for — or at any rate did not allow enough for — the natural tendency of all utterance in an exalted mood to find rhythmic expression. In particular, he overlooked the fact that the New Testament era was an era of the revival of 'prophecy.' Everywhere in the Church there were men or women who burst out into more or less ecstatic deliverances which they believed (if I may adopt the phraseology of modern spiritualism) to be 'under the control' of the Spirit of Jesus. I have myself been present at a gathering of an obscure modern sect in which

e phenomena of 'speaking with tongues' and 'prophecy' oc-
rred. I noted two factors about the utterances of the prophets.
ıey were full of Biblical phrases and thoughts, and they were
ythmical in form. There is undoubtedly some psychological
ınnection between rhythm and any utterance when the speaker
as we say, carried out of himself. The 'hwyl' of the Welsh
ıtor is a case in point. It is not an accident that the prophets
the Old Testament, under an impulsion which they felt to be
ım outside and above themselves (for 'Thus saith the Lord'
s by no means to them a mere figure of speech), expressed
:mselves in poetic form. It would be surprising if prophets in
e New Testament era likewise had not given utterance in the
ms and rhythms traditional to the race.

I have argued elsewhere on other grounds that the author of
Fourth Gospel was a 'prophet.' That would account for the
ment of poetic rhythm which Dr. Burney detects (and per-
ɔs exaggerates) in the discourses of that Gospel. And even
the Synoptics we must be on our guard lest we mistake for
hentic words of Christ certain sayings which in origin may
ve been the deliverance of some prophet speaking 'in the
rit of Jesus'—deliverances believed by the prophet himself
l accepted by the community as authentic messages from the
rist in Heaven. Some of these messages may well have been
tten down; and these might easily have been gathered up,
ng with authentic poems of Jesus, in the Synoptics or even in
ɔurce as old as 'Q.'

To discriminate between original sayings of Jesus and pro-
tic utterances of this kind, a test other than poetic form is
uired. Three such tests suggest themselves. First, has the
sage the indefinable quality of great poetry, or is it merely
thmic speech? Secondly, does the matter in the main reflect
rage religious conceptions of late Judaism or of early Chris-
ity, or does it evince a spiritual insight or sensitiveness of
ical perception decidedly above that average? Thirdly, does
assage purporting to be the 'word of the Lord' provide a
ır-cut answer to problems which are unlikely to have arisen
ing the earthly life of Jesus, but which we know to have be-
ıe urgent in the Apostolic Age? Take, for example, the
ning words of the discourse beginning, 'Go not into any way

of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Mt. x, 5*ff*). This might well be the answer given by some prophet on an occasion when the little Jerusalem community had 'enquired of the Lord' whether the Twelve ought to take part in the Gentile mission. Indeed, the conviction which, as we gather from Galatians ii, 7 *ff*, was entertained by Peter and John that they ought to confine their preaching to the circumcision, may well have been derived from this particular 'oracle.'

Such a view of the origin of this discourse in Matthew by no means rules out the possibility that it contains genuine logia of Jesus. Old Testament prophets, and to a far greater extent Apocalyptic writers, frequently reproduce (usually with interpretative variation and amplification) fragments of the prophecies of older writers. And there is one quite obvious instance of the attribution to Jesus of a discourse which, while as a whole it represents the utterance of some prophet, yet certainly embodies genuine logia of Christ. In the 'Little Apocalypse' in Mark xiii, we have a discourse which fails to satisfy any of the three tests mentioned above. It is not great poetry; the ideas are at the conventional level of contemporary Jewish Apocalyptic and it seems intended to meet the need of an age when the postponement of the return of Christ in glory was causing perplexity to the faithful. The end, it is emphasized (xiii, 8), is not immediate; wars, earthquakes and famines have happened, but these are merely the *beginning* of the birth-pangs of the New Age.

It is evident, then, that the application of the study of poetic forms and rhythm will not *by itself* suffice for the critical determination of the original teaching of Jesus. But whenever on other grounds the genuineness of a saying is probable, this method will often lead to results which can reasonably be regarded as objective, and may serve to clinch an otherwise doubtful conclusion. And where this is the case, we may feel a greater confidence than most critics have hitherto dared to claim that *ipissima verba* of Christ have been substantialy preserved.

You will naturally be expecting me to conclude by saying something about the elaborate attempt of the Germans to apply the conception of 'pattern' for critical purposes; I mean the work of the *Formgeschichtliche* school, or 'Form-Criticism' a

s most conveniently rendered in English. I am going to dis-point you, for three sufficient reasons: firstly, Dr. Major has eady given you an extraordinarily lucid account of its general aracteristics; secondly, I have quite exhausted the time owed me; and thirdly, I do *not* think this particular use of attern' supremely important. Undoubtedly the Form-Critics ve called attention to a number of hitherto unnoticed pheno-na—many of them interesting. But my own feeling is that importance they attach to these phenomena is excessive, and t the conclusions which they base on them are gravely mis-ding. To speak in this way about a well-known movement of olarship, without some attempt to justify one's words, would merely arrogant. So I may perhaps explain that I am uggling to get ready for the press some time next year the tures which I gave in the United States last Easter on the *storical Evidence for the Life of Christ.* In these I shall en-avour to set down my reasons for this judgment—or, as some you may in the meanwhile prefer to style it, this prejudice.

MODERNIST YOUTH MOVEMENT

To the Editor of the *Modern Churchman.*

During the Conference week at Birmingham, it was decided orm a fellowship of young Modernists in connection with the dern Churchmen's Union. It is proposed to hold a confer-e at Cambridge in January to discuss the practical tasks of dernists.

I should be glad if any young men and young women who interested in Modernist ideals and propaganda, would com-nicate with me.

F. H. Amphlett Micklewright,
Honorary Secretary.

Hulme Hall,
Victoria Park,
Manchester, 14.
1st October, 1934.

The Modern Churchmen's Union

FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF LIBERAL RELIGIOUS THOUGHT.

Inaugurated at the Church House, Westminster, October 31st, 1898.

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